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“Don’t look back in anger”. War museums’ role in the post conflict tourism-peace nexus.

Fabio Carbone

Abstract

This article pioneers the debate on the role of war related attractions as infrastructure for peace, particularly in post conflict areas. Emphasis is given to war museums and their narrative. The current idea on the implicit causal relation between the representation of war and the promotion of peace is questioned. An alternative approach is proposed by linking theories from tourism, museum and peace studies. The application of the forgiveness model (Long & Brecke, 2003) to war museums’ narrative is proposed, as well a theoretical model on tourism and peace based on the ground-breaking conception of war related attractions as local infrastructure for peace. By doing so, the article elevates the peace-through-tourism debate to a higher level of complexity.

Keywords

Peace through tourism; Post-conflict tourism; War related attractions; War museums; Peace Education; Reconciliation.

May peace dwell especially in the soul of the rising generations (Samuel Palmer, 1811)

INTRODUCTION

This article is about a challenge. The common perception of living in a less stable and secure world is confirmed by data like those disclosed by the Institute for Economics and Peace (2018) about a decline in global peace. A widespread anxiety amongst people due to the proliferation of terms associated with non-state violence - such as insurrection (and insurgents), terrorism, transnational organized crime and religious conflicts - reflects the fact that state violence is no longer the only threat to global peace (UCDP, 2019). In addition, examples proliferate of unsuccessful international campaigns officially conceived to eradicate dictatorial and tyrannical regimes in some areas of the world, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). By way of example, since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq (2003), the Iraqi people have endured chaos, poverty and sectarian violence for more than 17 years (Quirico, 2019). The evil that appeared “banal” to Arendt (1965) due to its perpetration so incredibly mechanical and accurate, seems to spread globally today, and Duffield (2014) points out how the rising level of violence and misery are accepted as normal, and new forms of humanitarian aid intervention, far from solving the problem, accommodate and coexist with this instability and inequality.
In this scenario, designing and implementing strategies aimed at cultivating peaceful relations is one of the greatest challenges and greatest priorities of our time. And it is - or should be - a shared responsibility, transversal to all civil societies and economic sectors, as building peace requires a comprehensive approach, and regardless of the field, the research agenda of each discipline should link somehow with this aspect of the reality surrounding us.

In this context, the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represents a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity worldwide, the 16th SDG specifically oriented to the creation of a more peaceful and just world. Tourism - as any other sector - is called to contribute to the achievement of these global goals, and tourism studies are being deeply influenced. The present work is to be contextualized within the research on tourism and the 16th SDG and, in general, within the peace-through-tourism debate. The latter is a fascinating and controversial debate, based on the belief that travel eases negative prejudice and reduces sociocultural stereotypes through a direct experience of a different culture. But this very basis of the discourse on tourism and peace is one of its conceptual weakness. It is indeed assumed that contact and interaction created by travel results in the formation of personal meaningful relationship in which locals are apprehended as individuals, rather than in a stereotypical way (Suvantola, 2018).

Nevertheless, the idea of tourism as socio-cultural encounter (Saarinen & Manwa, 2008) promoting positive contacts between different cultures is challenged - totally or partially - by empirical evidence of studies on tourists-hosts social dynamics. Since the nineties, indeed, several studies have shown that tourism sometimes has the effect of reinforcing cultural stereotypes about the places visited, rather than dissipating them. Bruner (1991), for instance, denounces the fact that developing countries cultural displays serve as a mirror for Western fantasies, reflecting back in performance what tourists desire. In this sense, the market itself thus takes advantage of the existence of stereotypes (Walle, 1993) and the information we are given about different cultures within tourism marketing is intentionally structured around those stereotypes, somehow feeding the Western discourse on the “exotic other” (Suvantola, 2018).

Equally, the study by Yang (2011) on ethnic tourism and cultural representation shows how stereotypical conceptions of minority people are sometimes reinforced by representations in ethnic tourism. With particular reference to the ability of tourism to be a vehicle of peace, interesting and strongly significant is the Italian journalist and war correspondent’s account of tourists visiting the magnificent downtown of Ben Ali’s Tunis and Mubarak’s Cairo, few hundred meters away from the misery and the human rights violations that kept the population in chains at the dawn of the Arab Spring, and the way the Assad family in Syria used to supervise, as a precautionary measure, the contact between tourists and the local population (Quirico, 2019, pp. 13, 49, 87).
Given the current limitations of the discourse on peace through tourism (which will be further analysed in the next sections), the present work explores new theoretical paths to make better sense of the association between tourism and peace, particularly in post-conflict societies. In the context of post-conflict tourism, the role of war-related tourist attractions, namely war museums, is explored as a potential key agent to consolidate peace in post-conflict societies. The epistemological objective of this study is to propose an approach which takes greater account of peace and conflict studies in the peace-through-tourism debate, in order to avoid simplifications and bias that would compromise the impact of any theoretical extension in the real world. Three main fields of study thus converge: 1) tourism studies; 2) peace and conflict studies; 3) heritage and museum studies.

The road map followed across these three areas lead to controversial arguments, such as the very definition of peace and the idea that tourism could be a catalyst of it, the idea of war-related attraction as difficult heritage and the consciousness about the war museums’ strong political and identitarian connotation. It is also ontologically opportune to notice that authoritative scholars such as Cohen (2011) identify the visits to conflict-related attractions with dark tourism, the latter being defined as tourism to sites related to death and disaster (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 1996). Nevertheless, despite “post-conflict tourism is usually conceptualised under dark tourism scholarship” (Causevic & Lynch, 2011, p. 780), the present paper does not focus on the association between tourism, war and peace with the aim to debate on a specific definition, but rather on the role given to tourism in the process of peace education and reconciliation, conflict transformation and social renewal of a destination, following in the footsteps of Causevic and Lynch (2011).

The UNWTO states that “(Tourism) can consolidate peace in post-conflict societies” (UNWTO, 2020). In academic terms, Smith (1998) pioneered the debate about post conflict tourism with a paper published by the *Annals of Tourism Research* on tourist activities after the World War II (WWII): “WWII was a milestone in tourism: it created the technology for fast, efficient global transit; it generated the motivations for mass tourism and (...) favoured tourism development” (Smith, 1998, p. 204). Since then, post conflict tourism was approached from different perspectives. From the international relations point of view, tourism was associated to the transitional justice and state-(re)building (Novelli, Morgan, & Nibigira, 2012), the (re)construction of contested national identities (Zhang, Xiao, Morgan, & Ly, 2018), to the nation branding (Dinnie, 2008) as well as the international cooperation and cultural diplomacy (Carbone, 2017; Edgell, Allen, Smith, & Swanson, 2008). In this context, it is also worth to mention the debate linking tourism to the promotion and protection of human rights (Higgins-Desbiolles & Blanchard, 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles & Whyte, 2015). Furthermore, the distinctive period of post-conflict tourism development was theorised and categorised as “phoenix tourism”, in the context of social...
renewal of the destination and its people (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). Other studies shed light on the process of transformation of war inherited sites into cultural tourist attractions (Packer, Ballantyne, & Uzzell, 2019) and, in this sense, the importance of the intercultural dialogue and public participation in the process of heritage management have been highlighted as key aspects of the peace-through-tourism debate (Carbone, Oosterbeek, Costa, & Ferreira, 2020; Malek, Carbone, & Alder, 2017; Nogués-Pedregal, 2012; Nyaupane, Timothy, & Poudel, 2015).

The choice to explore the role of war museums in the context of post-conflict tourism represents the very challenge. A vast literature indeed exists analysing the more immediate association between peace, peace education and peace museums. For instance, van den Dungen (2017) builds on the intellectual positions of Erasmus of Rotterdam on how regrettable war is, and argues how peace education still represents a missing element in the formation of contemporary women and men. Although fully in accordance with the arguments underlying these studies, the present article opens an alternative window by taking as a starting point not the link between culture of peace and museums of peace, but that (much less immediate and certainly more controversial) between promotion of peace and war museums. The literature indeed suggests the potential value of the association between war heritage and tourism in this sense, but the present article propose a conceptual explanation on how this process can occur. namely, this study contributes to the progress of the debate on tourism and peace, and in this sense it further develops and significantly deepens the significant study by Packer et al. (2019) recently published in Annals of Tourism Research on the potential impact of war heritage interpretation in the process of reconciliation.

In hierarchical terms, this paper firstly introduces the academic debate on tourism and peace. After that, the study moves on to museums as important elements of tourism supply side and speculates on the link between museums’ emerging role in society and tourism as a driver for positive change. Reciprocity and a complementarity relation between the transformational role of tourism and the renewed social role of museums is thus established. In particular, the paper speculates about the role of war museums within the conceptual construct about tourism and peace. In this sense, the impact of war museums on visitors is reviewed in a peace education perspective, proposing a museum discourse reviewed and informed by the forgiveness model by Long and Brecke (2003). The convergence between the different fields – tourism studies, museum studies and peace and conflict studies - is therefore discussed as one of the main requirements for a more effective discourse on tourism and peace. As direct, practical implication, the present work encourages and support tourism practitioners and policymakers in managing and developing tourism destination and products that contribute more effectively to the creation of a culture of peace, particularly in post-conflict areas.

It is finally appropriate to underline the significance of this work in the context of the unprecedented moment that tourism - and the entire society - is experiencing
due to the COVID19 pandemic. Several authors are pointing out how this situation, even if dramatic, could be an opportunity to return to travel and tourism with a renewed commitment to sustainability and on June 2020, Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, claimed the important role of tourism sector to overcoming the pandemic, as “by bringing people together, tourism can promote solidarity and trust, crucial ingredients in advancing the global cooperation that is so urgently needed at this time”. The message ends by encouraging “all those involved in the tourism sector to explore how we can recover better”. The present work responds to this call of duty by proposing a theoretical extension in the peace-through-tourism debate, which can impact the sector by inspiring and informing future policies and practices.

1 TOURISM AND PEACE: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW ON THE ACADEMIC DEBATE
Despite the existence of a conspicuous literature on tourism and peace, this subject still appears fuzzy, resulting in different interpretations of the topic itself. In this regard, the authors of this paper identified three main approaches to the topic:
1) a philosophical approach;
2) a case study-based approach and
3) a complex approach.

The philosophical approach is at the very origin of the debate, and makes sense of the association between tourism and peace by emphasising the fact that travelling reduces cultural and psychological distances among people (Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008) and consequently, through a non-well defined causal effect, it may positively influence international politics and foster world peace (Edgell et al., 2008), encouraging cooperation among nations (Askjellerud, 2003; Causevic, 2010). Already in 1945, among the European population fresh out from the terrific experience of the II World War “the assertion that tourism could make a valuable contribution to peace making, was highly credible” (Hugues, 2004, p. 498).

Nowadays this approach can be contextualized in the global aspiration for a renewed sense of shared responsibility within the society (Bauman, 2018), as opposed to the pervasive sense of acceptance of violence and misery as normal societal features (Duffield, 2014). A sort neo-humanism alerts on the urgency to regain the human dimension by revaluing areas such as philosophy (Fitch, 2018) and rediscovering its strong political vocation to inspire public policies as alternative to the constraints of the neo-liberalism (Di Cesare, 2018). In this sense, authors such as D’Amore (1988) - who somehow inaugurated the peace-through-tourism debate by creating the concept of tourism as industry of peace – have challenged “the global dominance of neoliberalism that has allowed the social welfare aspects of tourism to be overshadowed by its financial market potential, and enables to review tourism’s capacity to contribute to human well-being,
human rights recognition, conflict resolution, and to the worldwide enhancement of justice and a culture of peace” (Pearse, 2016, p. 87).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to make a few considerations on this approach. Back in the nineties, Hall (1994, p. 91) already argues that tourism seen as a force for peace is a “simplistic interpretation of the complexities of tourism and international relations”. More recently, other authors, such as Carbone (2017, 2019) and Farmaki (2017) criticize such a simplistic argument mainly based on the contact hypothesis. The speculative reasoning on a causal link between tourism and peace is indeed weakened by the lack of a precise theoretical framework and it is not totally free from naïve bias. The major limitation is represented by the misleading assumption that tourism per se is a promoter of peace – the formula proposed by Lisle (2000) “war causes tourism, tourism causes peace” is an example of this approach. Several evidences weaken this type of argument. For instance, although some forms of tourism are unquestionably more responsible and respectful than others (Maoz, 2006), the study carried out by Sirakaya-Turk, Nyaupane, and Uysal (2014) shows tourist experience can paradoxically reinforce visitor’s prejudices and stereotyped visions towards the host communities, rather than promoting a more careful and respectful approach towards local cultures.

Alongside these conceptual speculations a conspicuous literature exists containing case studies generically linked to the debate on tourism and peace (Causevic & Lynch, 2011; Cho, 2007; Moufakkir & Kelly, 2010; Pearse, 2016; Scott, 2012; Wohlmuther & Wintersteiner, 2014). They provide evidences about how tourism can become (or not) a catalyst for change and development. Nevertheless, this literature reflects, in its theoretical framework, on the fundamental lack of unanimous agreement about what the research subject of tourism and peace actually is. Indeed, if unanimity exists about the fact that tourism prospers in stability and peace and cannot flourish in conflictual environments (Farmaki, 2017; Fyall, Prideaux, & Timothy, 2006; Khalilzadeh, 2018), on the other hand the idea of tourism and peace itself, as an academic topic, still seems to be a very poorly defined subject, and the growing number of case studies linked to the peace-through-tourism debate reflects the vast range of possible perspectives and interpretations.

Some case studies, for example, fall into the debate on tourism by analysing specific forms of cultural and/or dark tourism, such as tourist activities carried out at Hiroshima (Selmi, Tur, & Dornier, 2012; Yoshida, Bui, & Lee, 2016), Auschwitz (Miles, 2002), the beach of Okinawa (Figal, 2012) or those of Normandy. In this case, a pertinent concern raises about the need to consider these places as tourist attractions rather than war memorials, or vice-versa (M. Cooper, 2006). Other authors relate the topic to the geopolitics, like Rami Khalil Isaac (2010) who, based on his findings from a case study in Palestine, concluded that even tourism became a tool at the disposal of Israel in its constant effort of establish its supremacy over Palestinian people.
Finally, it is possible to group in a third and last category those works that apply - implicitly or explicitly - the paradigm of complexity to the discussion on the causal relation between tourism and peace. The concept of complexity is used with reference to the holistic and transdisciplinary character of the debate on tourism and peace, in which interaction and interdependence of the areas of research involved are emphasized. Several authors try to look beyond the area of tourism by establishing and exploring links with other social, political and human aspects that could eventually represent a prior condition to actually promote peace through tourism activities. The association between tourism and peace is completed by subjects such as sustainability (De Villiers, 2014), globalisation (Reid, 2003), cultural heritage (Carbone & Oosterbeek, 2021), human rights (Higgins-Desbiolles & Whyte, 2015), international relations (Tavares da Silva & Breda, 2021; Carbone, 2017), social innovation (Malek & Costa, 2015) and academic mobility (Monteiro, Lopes, & Carbone, 2021).

The search for new semantics and new lexical formulas is a feature of this type of works. Wohlmuther and Wintersteiner (2014), for instance, suggest the concept of “peace sensitive tourism” as alternative to “tourism and peace”. Rami and Hodge (2011) examine instead the idea of “justice tourism”, described as a form of purposeful travel directly aiming to meet criteria of social, political and environmental sustainability. In turn, Tucker (2016), prefers to focus on the analysis of the specific topic of “empathy in tourism”, as an emotional prerequisite for cross-cultural understanding. Table 1 summarizes the typification described above. For a more detailed summary, see Appendix 1.

Table 1. Summary of the analysis of the literature on tourism and peace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Approach</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical</td>
<td>The philosophical approach inspired the debate on the association between tourism and peace and lead to the peace-through-tourism discourse. It continues to exist somehow at the heart of the debate and inspires it.</td>
<td>The approach is too simplistically based on the contact hypothesis. Arguments are controversial and theoretically weak, thus difficult to operationalize for a real contribution of tourism to the creation of a culture of peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study-based</td>
<td>The literature characterised by this approach provides a large empirical database on a wide variety of aspects related to the association between tourism and peace.</td>
<td>Since the main subject of the debate is not yet clear, it is difficult to systematize organically the conclusions of the different studies and make sense of them in a broader debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>An approach that tends to inform tourist studies with theories from other areas, such as conflict and peace studies, cultural heritage management, international law and human</td>
<td>This is a recent approach to a field of study that is not mature, yet. Although the complex approach lays the foundations for a much more mature theoretical debate, at the moment the lack of</td>
</tr>
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2 BRIDGING TOURISM AND MUSEUMS THROUGH THEIR RENEWED ROLE IN SOCIETY

Cultural heritage is a key resource for tourism (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). In particular, museums are among the most important component of the tourism supply (Prentice, 2001; Richards, 2001). Nevertheless, the relationship between tourism and museology is scarcely explored in the literature. While recognizing the large number of stakeholders that museums and tourism have in common, the different objectives and functions of the two sectors - one being commercial and the other non-profit – reflecting in different approaches and interests, can be seen as one of the greatest limitations to the establishment of a more fruitful and lasting interaction. In this sense, in the late 1990’s Glickman (1997, pp. 1-2) pointed out that “tourism people talk numbers like room nights, occupancy rates and parking for buses. Arts people talk creative programming and event planning”. Nevertheless, the recent conceptual evolution of these two areas towards a renewed role within society can today represent the focal point to bridge them more dynamically and effectively.

Museums have traditionally been places where “society can celebrate its past and constitute a sense for its cultural identity” (Tufts & Milne, 1999, p. 614). But at the end of the last century a debate inaugurated by Vergo (1989) introduced what has since then been known as new museology, and in the last two decades concerns for equality, diversity, social justice and human rights moved from the margins of museum research, policy and practice, to its very core, to actively inform contemporary public debates (Carbone, 2018; Dudley & Rodrigues, 2020; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012). The proposal discussed – not without controversies - at the General Assembly of the ICOM (Kyoto, 2019, September 9th) to opt for a new definition of museum which better reflects its social role, reflects the current transitional moment.

The potential of museums as key intellectual and civic resources for social change has been recently emphasised by Janes and Sandell (2019) who inaugurated the concept of museum activism. Challenging perspectives on the cultural and political significance of contemporary museums and curatorial activism stress on the “dissatisfaction of the new museology towards the old one, judged to be too much about museums methods and too little about the purposes of museums” (Vergo, 1989, p. 3). A growing number of institutions are concerned to construct new narratives that represent a plurality of lived experiences, histories and identities which aim to support more progressive and ethically-informed ways of
looking at societal issues. Generally speaking, museums, galleries and heritage organisations are engaging with global social challenges such as the construction of a more fair and just society, shifting politics of identity at global, national and local levels. Some authors, nevertheless, alert about the fact that such a momentum is slowing down or, in some contexts, even reversing (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012).

While it has been noticed that museums used to promote themselves as tourist attractions in order to make themselves profitable (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), the above described evolution of the role of museums in the contemporary society coincides with a renewed relationship with tourism (Akbulut & Artvinli, 2011; Carbone et al., 2020; Serravalle, Ferraris, Vrontis, Thrassou, & Christofi, 2019; Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). In turn, also in the tourism sector an impetus exists towards more responsible and conscious practices aiming to produce positive changes. Beyond the trends debated above (section 1), it is also worth to mention the concept of transformative (or transformational) tourism which emphasizes the positive change that travel and tourism can have on human behaviour and, consequently, on the society (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017; Reisinger, 2013). The model proposed by Cooper and Hall (2016, p. 24) could be eventually shortly updated in what concerns the "popular idea of tourism": from “Holiday travel for leisure” to a an idea of tourism more related to civic commitment. In this sense, the present work advocates for the establishment of a stronger link between tourism and museums, in order to feed reciprocally the paradigmatic change of their role within society.

3 A RENEWED PARTNERSHIP TOURISM-MUSEUMS AS A LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE

The changes towards a closer museum’s relationship to activism (Janes & Sandell, 2019) and the search a for new role of tourism within society beyond the neo-liberalist constraints that kept it away from its human dimension so far, therefore converge with the debate on peace through tourism. The parallel evolution of the role of tourism and museums described above, paves the way for innovative collaborations, also in the context of the revisited concept of peace building.

The process of creation of peace was indeed conceived as a top-down process, but this vision is being reviewed. The creation of peace is now approached as a bottom-up process, in which a variety of peace-building agents intervene at local and regional level (Öjendal, Leonardsson, & Lundqvist, 2017). According to Chandler (2017) we are indeed assisting to a transformation from peacebuilding as an international project based on universalist assumptions, to the understanding of peace as a necessarily indigenous process based on plural and non-linear understandings of differences. In this sense, the idea of “sustaining peace”, a reviewed architecture of the United Nations Peacebuilding, recognizes that a “critical determinant of success is fostering inclusive national ownership” by
involving domestic actors (UN, 2015a, p. 8). The United Nations itself recognizes they have not invested enough on addressing root causes of conflicts (UN, 2015b) and according to Richmond (2011, p. 58) “what is needed is an exploration of culture, needs and welfare-based approaches to peacebuilding that are context sensitive”. This situation of transition opens the door to ground-breaking proposals about innovative partnerships and practices in the context of peace creation.

In this context, museums could help to sustain and enrich society in times marked by insecurity and increasing conflict, by stimulating a curiosity that is vital to understanding (Thomas, 2016). Nevertheless, the contribution of heritage to peacebuilding has been largely ignored and, according to Walters (2017), cultural heritage is often reduced to simply a way of encouraging community-based initiatives that have limited impact on creating conditions for sustainable change. The renewed association proposed above between museums and tourism could represent a change in trend in this sense, becoming what Richmond (2013, p. 271) calls Local Infrastructures for Peace acting in the context of “peace formation”.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2**: Link between tourism and peace (from a tourist attractions’ perspective)

In general, this conceptual association lays the basis for inferring that, generally, one of the theoretical links that can be established between tourism and peace lies in the fact that some tourist attractions (or even all of them, depending on the destination) can act as local infrastructures for peace, promoting peace education (Figure 2) or, as it will be discussed later in this article, as spaces for the active promotion of reconciliation and peace creation.

**3 WAR MUSEUMS’ ROLE IN POST CONFLICT TOURISM**
War museums aim to preserve the memory and tell the story of one (or more) armed conflicts by showcasing material related to military operations as well as objects that give an insight into people’s experiences of war, eventually reflecting on the immediate and long term effects of the war on the civilian population. Among the war museums of reference is undoubtedly safe to mention the Imperial War Museums (UK) exploring conflicts from WW1 to the present day. Other interesting experiments exist nowadays, such as the Museo Diffuso della Resistenza, della Deportazione, della Guerra, dei Diritti e della Libertà ("Widespread" Museum of Resistance, Deportation, War, Rights and Freedom) in Italy. Among the war museums related to more recent conflicts, it is worth to mention the Tunel Spasa, an underground tunnel served as a lifeline for the city of Sarajevo in 1993 to find shelter from Serbian sniper fire and mortar fire, turned in a war museum on the Siege of Sarajevo (1992 -1996). The Museum of the Islamic Revolution and the Holy Defense, in Tehran (Iran), focusing on the Iran-Iraq war (1980 –1988), is today another outstanding example of war museum, thanks to the massive employment of new technologies that guarantee a touching and remarkable experience.

The attractiveness of these places can be explained, besides their obvious historical interest, by the fact that “warfare is a penetrating societal interest” (Smith, 1998, p. 205). So, “despite the horrors and destruction (and also because of them), the memorabilia of warfare and allied products probably constitutes the largest single category of tourist attractions in the world” (Smith, 1996, p. 248) even if it is worth to notice that “warfare heritage tourism evokes different emotions and degrees of satisfaction among visitors” (Gieling & Ong, 2016, p. 45). The present study aims to further explore this subject by associating war museums with the peace-through-tourism debate, particularly in post-conflict contexts, in line with the idea that the association of war heritage and tourism could be “a driving force for sharing values, for education and knowledge, for international solidarity, and for passing on the torch of peace” (Jansen-Verbeke & George, 2013, p. 285).

The potential of the impact of war heritage interpretation on reconciliation has been already acknowledged (Packer et al., 2019). Nevertheless, defining an attraction such as a war museum as an agent for the creation of peace is all but devoid of controversy. War-related attractions and, in particular, war museums tend to be controversial by nature, as their narrative is often result of a “process of selective appropriation” (Somers & Gibson, 1994, p. 60). They thus become places for celebrating national identity and political spaces (Sternfeld, 2018) where the interpretations of the past can be controversial and the “materialization of identity” (Macdonald, 2013) takes place. Therefore, it is safe to say that war museums often reflect the mythopoetic ability of a geopolitical subjects, that is, “the capacity to tell its story, in order to create cohesion within its borders and with respect to its outside” (Caracciolo, 2020, p. 7).
From the theoretical point of view, a wide literature is dedicated to what Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) define as “dissonant heritage”. Gegner and Ziino (2012) examine the dynamics and the procedures through which heritage is mobilized in remembering war, reconstructing landscapes, political systems and identities after conflict, highlighting the modes by which governments, communities, and individuals claim validity for their own experiences of war, and the meanings they attach to them. Dissonant heritage can be used in the creation of cultural tourism products, in forms of specific tourism routes. Šešić Dragićević and Mijatović Rogač (2014) see in this practice an opportunity to overcome conflicting interpretation of common cultural heritage in the Balkan region. On the other hand, a study by Battilani, Bernini, and Mariotti (2018) concludes that the existence of a proper cultural policy and public debate is very important in places where dissonant heritage exists and it is used for tourism, in order to avoid visitors-residents conflicts.

On the other hand, Suzuki (2009, p. 250) states that war museums “envision what they do as a form of public education and peace activism”. In this sense, war museums usually help visitors to explore the causes of war and its impact on people’s lives, thus acquiring an enormous pedagogical potential in the perspective of peace education. And this is the aspect on which the present paper aims to develop on. It is anyway opportune to keep in mind that museum narratives are normally influenced by “intellectual, political, social or educational aspirations and preconceptions of the museum director, the curator, the scholar, the designer the sponsor, the political, social or/and educational system” (Vergo, 1989, p. 3). Wellington (2017), for instance, observes a range of different exhibitions in Britain, Canada and Australia, and reveals complex imperial dynamics in the ways these countries developed diverging understandings of the First World War, even despite their cultural, political and institutional similarities. It is therefore necessary to overcome somehow the arbitrariness of the dissonant heritage.

Another aspect that eventually obstacles the effective role of war museums as spaces of peace education is the misleading assumption according to which visitors “learn from the horrific past and go home with renewed determination to build peace” (Suzuki, 2009, p. 250). This assumption is based on the belief that “identification with pain, a universal true feeling, would lead to structural social change” and create a peaceful world where “there is no more pain” (Berlant, 2000: 45, 59). According to this assumption then, one can say that the message of peace is implicit in the discourse of a war museum. Though, according to a different school of thought, namely that of the historical materialist approach to the past, a tragedy as an armed conflict is remembered with both an acute sense of irreversibility and an immense sense of regret that compels us to imagine proactively other alternative courses of history (Yoneyama, 1998). The above discussion therefore, strongly confirms the need for strategies that overcome any controversy, and narratives able to transform a memory of war into a clear and explicit message of peace.
4 MAKING THE IMPLICIT, EXPLICIT. TRANSFORMING A MEMORY OF WAR INTO A MESSAGE OF PEACE

The reason why the authors of this article consider the role of war museums in the field of peace and post conflict tourism particularly important, has to do with the process of reconciliation. Let’s consider, for instance, the hostile visions and ethnic divisions strongly persisting in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina – as observed by Omer (2017) - especially among war victims. In intergenerational terms, youth born after the end of the war are exposed to routines performed by parents, educators, and media tending to dehumanize the rival communities: these youth are even more predisposed to resist reconciliation efforts than their parents, fearing that reconciliation means accepting the sufferance their parents endured during the war (Omer, 2017). This example perfectly demonstrates the urgent need to involve the population, especially young people, in practices promoting intercommunity dialogue grounded on peace education, enabling a realistic adjustment to the post war reality and with the ultimate purpose of reconciliation. In this sense, one of the most appropriate spaces for this process to take place is the war museum, where the conflict is remembered. Here, the narrative implemented should involve visitors in an experience which is cathartic with regards to the trauma and the pain directly and/or indirectly experienced. Peace education aims indeed to develop reflective and contributing capacities for achieving and maintaining peace (Reardon, 2002), namely by 1) understanding the richness of the concept of peace; 2) examining fears, gaining knowledge about security systems; 3) understanding violence; 4) developing intercultural understanding; 5) promoting social justice with peace; 6) encouraging respect to living, 7) ending violence (Harris, 2002).

For tourism to actually be a catalyst for peace at a global level, some preconditions are required, including internationally shared guidelines for the management and promotion of destinations (Carbone, 2017) and their tourist attractions. With regards to the specific case discussed in this article, the common element shared among war museums worldwide should be the presence of a narrative that goes beyond the mythopoeias and the evocation of a common drama to reinforce the identity of a nation or anyway a group. This approach indeed tends to close the communities in themselves rather than open it to the world and, most important in post-conflict areas, to reconciling with former opponents. Reconciliation and peacebuilding are, according to Bar-Tal and Vered (2016, p. 249), “a long process of major societal change involving building a new socio-psychological repertoire that allows reaching an agreement with the adversary and (...) an allied relationship based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of mutual needs”. It is therefore necessary to think about what Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 63) indicate as metanarratives, “‘master-narratives’ in which we are embedded as contemporary actors”, in this case aiming to reconcile and promote a culture of peace.
“Don’t look back in anger”. Proposal for an internationally shared war museums’ narrative

Developing a shared vision – the above-mentioned metanarrative - involves a process and a product. Using a war museum to display the process through which a community passes from the harm inflicted by the war to the reconciliation with the former opponents can represent a valid alternative to the misleading belief according to which displaying the atrocity of war implicitly involves a message of peace (see section 3). Findings in the field of evolutionary psychology support the role of emotions behind rationality in the process of decision making related to reconciliation (Ren, 2014). In this sense, useful studies exist on the impact of museum design in the experiences of visitors (Macleod, 2012; MacLeod, Austin, Hale, & Ho Hing-Kay, 2018; Soren, 2019) and on the creation of highly effective and affective museum spaces through meaningful museum narratives supported by the use of technologies (Macleod, 2012). Though, preparing an engaging tourist experience is still not enough to guarantee an effective contribution to peace. The impact of the museum experience on the visitor should go beyond a general awareness on the senselessness of war (paltry contribution to peace!). Visitors’ emotions should rather be conveyed through a sort of cathartic path that clearly showcase the process leading to forgiveness and reconciliation in post-conflict settings, in the pursuit of transformational change.

Even though there is no set method to educate to forgiveness and reconciliation, academics and practitioners developed processes for people to explore on their own forgiveness journeys (Enright, 2008; Luskin, 2002; Tutu & Tutu, 2014). In particular, this study identifies in the widely accepted forgiveness model by Long and Brecke (2003) the most appropriate reference model for the creation of a war museums’ narrative. The model indeed effectively describes the entire behavioural and psychological process leading communities and individuals to reconcile after a conflict (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Synthesis of the Long and Brecke (2003)’s forgiveness model](image-url)
According to Long and Breck’s (2003), reconciliation is achieved through a process where former opponents accept the harm inflicted by the conflict (1) and overcome the feelings of anger and revenge. It allows them to build a renewed, post-conflict identity (2). In this phase former opponents start to see themselves “as something more than a victim in the relationship, and to see the other as something other than an enemy” (Kaufman, 2004, p. 145), and it is essential to accept an unavoidable partial justice (3). At the end of this process, the parts once in conflict can finally establish new positive relations in a spirit of reconciliation and mutual trust (4).

The most significant criticism to this model has been moved from the area of evolutionary psychology. Ren (2014, p. 167), indeed, wonder what could motivate the public to hold certain attitudes towards reconciliation and follow certain patterns of behaviour. However, the study conducted by Packer et al. (2019) shows that a raised awareness of the importance of peace is among the most significant effects on the visitor of the war-related tourist attraction they analysed. These findings indeed “are encouraging as they suggest that war heritage interpretation can lead visitors to adopt a more inclusive perspective, rather than a narrow focus on national pride or patriotism” (Packer et al., 2019, p. 113).

It is therefore possible to speculate that the potential described by those authors can be further developed and subsequently expressed through a clear reference to the reconciliation process by following the forgiveness model to build war museums’ narrative. Along this path, the visitor is thus involved in an experience that is positive, constructive and proactive rather than passive (commiseration for the harm experienced). Activities facilitating transformative experiences on personal and inter-personal levels, involve:

- logical thinking;
- deep critical reflection;
- challenging of assumptions;
- learning lessons;
- creativity, innovation and reimagining;
- deep conversations;
- inclusive solutions,
- shared responsibility
- Honesty.

Figure 3 shows the adaptation of the general concept synthesized in figure 2, applied to post-conflict tourism as a mean of reconciliation and peace, in particular through the transformation of war museums, in local infrastructure for peace.
A limited spatial implementation of this concept would show an immediate impact on local visitors can be eventually found in the reduction of what Galtung (1990, p. 291) classified as “cultural violence”, sign of latent conflict, thus “negative peace” (Galtung, 2015, p. 618). However, from the viewpoint of the peace-through-tourism intent, the concept must necessarily be shared and applied internationally and the use of the forgiveness model to inspire war related attractions’ narratives should be considered to all intents and purposes as means of dialogue among former counterparts.

CONCLUSION
Human development and prosperity depend on a secure, peaceful environment. Nevertheless the world is currently confronted with new threats to peace, due to the unpredictability and irrational nature of a system of international relations which could lead to new wars and even nuclear disaster (Gittings, 2012). The approach adopted by international tourism organisations in recent decades has strengthened the concept of tourism as an instrument of peace and dialogue, introducing this idea among the principles of sustainability, in line with the SDG 16. Nevertheless, tourism is included as a target only in Goals 8, 12 and 14 (inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively). Surprisingly the contribution of tourism to peace seems to be de facto underestimated, despite the UNWTO’s institutional mission is “the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms (Art. 3). This article proposes the amendment of this choice, by including tourism as a target in Goal
16. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that such a circumstance reflects on the theoretical weakness of the arguments in support of the speculation on the causal relationship between tourism and peace creation. For tourism to effectively contribute to peace it is necessary to apply a complex approach, in theory and practice. Theoretically, the use of concepts from field of research other than tourism helps to understand and make better sense of that complex dynamics that the peace-trough-tourism discourse underlies. This knowledge should then inform detailed guidelines to be shared internationally within the sector.

Keeping this in mind, this article linked theories from tourism, museum and peace and conflict studies, aiming to fill the gap related to the lack of clarity about how post-conflict tourism could contribute to the process of reconciliation. In particular, this article focused on the role of war related attractions in this process. A theoretical extension of the academic knowledge about the relationship between tourism and peace was thus elaborated, by suggesting the use of war related attractions as local infrastructures for peace.

The idea is built on the promising results of the study by Packer, et al. (2019) on the effects of war heritage interpretation on visitors, but the conceptual analysis of war related attractions, namely war museums, pointed out limitations in their ability to promote reconciliation and peace. Their political use as places of celebration of identity can, on the contrary, indirectly stimulate feelings of anger and even will of revenge (Barber, Maltby, & Macaskill, 2005; McCullough, 2008). An urgent need exists, thus, for 1) a shared conceptual approach to the management of these attractions as hubs of peace education for sustainable transformation in divided societies, and 2) the definition of clear guidelines about how these places could transmit a shared vision of a peaceful future, combining collective wisdom, shared analysis and reflective practices. To make explicit the war museums’ message of peace and ensure an effective impact on visitors by proposing concrete ways to reconciliation and peace represent a further priority.

In this context, a last aspect is undoubtedly worth to be mentioned. As Tizzoni (2013) pointed out, the practice to promote tourism as a socio-political instrument of dialogue among former enemies started especially after the Second World War. Nevertheless, the visits to the symbolic places of the Second World War started to be a tourist practice only later, after a long and painful process of elaboration of one of the most tragic and controversial periods in history. Only in the nineties, indeed (thus almost fifty years after the end of the war!) war museums and memorials started to be established abandoning the commemorative logic, conceived with didactic functions (Tizzoni, 2013; Vierregg, 2000). This historical observation alerts us to the fact that, in practice, the conscious use of tourism and war museums in post-conflict areas must necessarily be conceived as a delayed, long-term practice, to be implemented with full respect of the will and the process of elaboration of the communities previously affected by the conflict.

**Future studies**
This theoretical study paves the way for a new strand of empirical research about the role of tourism and museum institutions in the context of peace creation. For example, an empirical study exploring war museums’ narrative and its time-specific and country-specific effects on visitors, speculating on discrepancy between the curators’ intended message – a message of peace – and the visitors’ perception.

REFERENCES


