



GENERATION OF A TOURISM PRODUCT: JEWISH HERITAGE TOURISM IN SPAIN

Shaul Krakover

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, (Israel) and
Dead Sea & Arava Science Center, Neve Zohar (Israel)

shaul@bgu.ac.il

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the supply side of an emerging new tourism attraction. Specifically, the research focuses on the transformation of Jewish heritage to a unique tourism product. Actual objectives are to assess the physical elements composing the Jewish heritage product and to examine their diversity in a sample of twenty Spanish towns and cities, members of Red de Juderías de España organization. Affiliation with a central actor raised the question to what extent different localities are affected by the central guidelines so as to generate a homogeneous product of a repetitive nature. A survey of all artifacts related to Jewish heritage tourism in these cities provided the data for the assessment. The results shed light on the process of converting abstract heritage to a tangible tourism product. The Jewish heritage product embraces a set of specific elements listed in descending order of their appearance: Jewish quarter, Jewish museum, a synagogue, a local Jewish persona, other artifacts, square or garden named after a Jewish persona, and Jewish cemetery. Not all places have all elements and elements of the same type are not necessarily at the same level of development. Analysis of the diversity of the product among the towns reveals a tendency towards homogeneity in the visual appearance of the Jewish quarters and the displays exhibited in Jewish museums. Nonetheless, certain elements such as synagogues and their story, local Jewish personas, and other minor artifacts tend to portray greater heterogeneity. In addition, the differences found in the product-mix among cities help to increase their diversity. It is recommended to exercise a greater care in preserving differences among cities especially those located in the same geographical cluster. In the way of analogy these findings seem to equally apply to other niche tourism products such as wine tourism, rural tourism, or other religions' tourism of non-monumental nature.

KEYWORDS

JHT; JHP; Juderías; Diversity; Product-mix; Trap of homogeneity.

ECONLIT KEYS

Z12; L15.

1. INTRODUCTION

Jewish heritage tourism (JHT) is a product offered to visitors in many European towns and cities (Gruber, 2002). In 2004 The European Institute of Cultural Routes announced the acceptance of the European Jewish Heritage route as a major cultural route of the Council of Europe (European Institute of Cultural Routes, 2013). In Spain, several cities have started to offer Jewish heritage sites in one way or another around 1986 on the occasion of the renewal of diplomatic relationships with Israel. However, the development of the JHT product in Spain has been boosted by the establishment of Red de Juderías de España (Network of Jewish quarters in Spain, henceforth RED), a public NGO in operation since 1995 (Russo and Romagosa, 2010). This NGO works in close cooperation with municipalities having interest in developing their Jewish heritage product (JHP). In a time span of eighteen years since its establishment, 24 towns and cities in Spain joined as members to the RED organization (Redjuderías, 2013), generating a network of municipalities defined by RED as Caminos de (ways of) Sefarad¹. RED provides to its member cities not only organizational and consulting services but also acts as a destination marketing organization (DMO) through its website, printed publications, and sales campaigns. RED has also linked its network members with the larger European Jewish heritage routes.

The objective of this study is to explore the supply side of the JHP as developed in Spain. It is long accepted in the field of tourism development, and especially in heritage tourism, that it is not the site that matters but the meaning and values assigned to it (Poria et. al., 2004). While this is true to most tourism products it is more so with respect to Jewish heritage sites given their non-monumental nature. Jewish relics in Spain were dormant or not identified as related to Jews for centuries. RED's activities, jointly with the

¹ Sefarad or Sepharad is a biblical name (Book of Obadiah, 1:20) referred by some commentators to Spain. Modern Hebrew, inter alia, names Spain as Sefarad.

municipalities involved, re-labeled these relics as Jewish, revived their ethnic-religious nature, and re-assigned them their special meaning.

This revival raises many research and practical questions from the historical, anthropological, sociological, geographical, managerial, economic, and planning standpoints. The current study will be limited, however, to the inquiry of the supply side of the JHT product. Specifically, the study intends to investigate the following two questions: a) what types of physical elements compose the JHP? And b) is it a homogeneous product that repeats itself everywhere or rather a product that allows for diversity among the various member cities? The implications are obvious. Homogeneous product will make it superfluous visiting more than one place – 'I have seen one I have seen all'. Heterogeneity will attract visitors to continue exploring more sites despite carrying the same title. Since the JHT multi-locational product is promoted in Spain by RED as a central organization it may a-priori encounter the risk of uniformity or what can be denoted as 'the trap of homogeneity'. Therefore it is interesting to assess to what extent the RED and its associated cities were capable of avoiding this trap.

Supply side investigation is relatively rare in the tourism literature (Smith, 1988; Ioannides and Debbage, 1998; Tremblay, 1998; Kontogeorgopoulos and Chulikavit, 2010). Although this study deals with a specific branch of cultural tourism, its methodology and findings may be generalized to other tourism products having closely similar characteristics like museums (Tufts and Milne, 1999), wine tourism (Cambourne and Macionis, 2000), ecotourism (Sirakaya, 1999), and other niche tourism products. Before presenting the methodology and findings the study proceeds in the regular path of presenting a literature review. The study will conclude with a discussion of the main themes and a summary section.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This review concentrates on the knowledge accumulated in the area of tourism product development with special attention paid to both specific topics

treated in this study, namely product diversity and the development of the JHP embedded within the area of religious tourism.

Tourism product: Related literature review suggests that the term 'tourism product' needs some clarification. Researchers seem to use product development and destination development as synonyms. For instance, the seminal paper by Smith (1994) titled 'the tourism product', refers to the 'product' in a broad sense to encompass the physical plant together with many kinds of facilities and services. These facilities and services are modeled in a production function as intermediate inputs and outputs to generate experiences at the final phase. It appears that Weiermair (2004) and Walder et al. (2006) also referred to 'tourism product' in its overall meaning. In contrast, Murphy, et al., (2000) are referring in their title to a 'destination product' and cover about the same broad set of facilities and services suggested by Smith for a tourism product.

It appears that a distinction should be drawn between tourism destination and tourism product. While destination connotes "a package of tourism facilities and services" (Hu and Ritchie, 1993) or "an amalgam of products and services available in one location" (Murphy, et al., 2000: 43, after Pearce, 1989), a product suggests a specific attraction or a set of attractions of the same type, not necessarily located in the same place. Examples of such products might be art museums, shopping streets, and religious sites, to name but three.

The tourism research literature seems to adapt this distinction as can be seen in the following sample. Tourism product was used in its limited sense by [Sánchez, et al. \(2006\)](#) referring to the purchase of tourism packages bought at travel agencies. Other papers that also referred to tourism product as a single entity are Caffyn and Lutz, (1999) for heritage tourism in a single location, and Bruwer (2003) for wine tourism at a multi-locational situation. Bramwell (1998) investigated the tourism product as related to visitors' satisfaction in urban settings. In this paper JHT will be referred to as a single product, both at specific locations and at multi-locational settings.

Jewish heritage tourism product: Despite the wide interest in religious tourism (e.g. Timothy and Olsen, 2006; McGettigan et. al., 2011), let alone

pilgrimage (e.g., [Swatos and Tomasi, 2002](#)), discussion of Jewish heritage as tourism product is rather rare. Ashworth (1996) can be credited for bringing this topic to the fore as an example of dissonant heritage (Ashworth 2003). A most impressive contribution to this topic is made in the book 'Virtually Jewish' by Ruth Ellen Gruber (2002). She documents the story of the "reinvention" of Jewish related relics in many towns and cities in Europe. Her interest is devoted to the historical process and its significance rather than its tourism aspect although it is explicitly brought up in the book in many instances.

The interest in the revival and exhibition of Jewish remnants has crossed the Pyrenees to Spain and Portugal. Several recent papers have been published regarding JHT in these two countries, highlighting certain aspects of the Jewish heritage product². Leite (2007) analyzed the symbols of Jewish remnants engraved in stone in Portugal from an anthropological point of view. Like Gruber (2002), she came to the conclusion that the exhibits are "materializing the absence" of Jews. Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2008; 2010) are attempting a comprehension of current 'convivencia' (co-existence). In the latter paper they analyze transformed interpretations introduced to a Judeo-Christian play staged in Hervás, Extremadura (one of RED's founding partners) during a three days Jewish festival held in town for more than a decade. [Russo and Romagosa \(2010\)](#) emphasized the potential of the Spanish network of Jewish quarters as a means for local and regional development, while [Krakover \(2012\)](#) pointed out shortcomings related to marketing in the network of Jewish quarters in Serra da Estrela, Portugal. None of these studies investigated the attributes of the Jewish product as they are presented to visitors by the local municipalities. This study intends to fill in this lacuna. Before doing so, the third and last section of the literature review presents literature considering the role of diversity in tourism development.

Role of diversity: Although diversity is at the very essence of tourism only few academic works were devoted explicitly to this feature. International tourists are motivated, inter alia, by their desire to see and experience things

² There are publications regarding Jewish history in the Iberian Peninsula written in Spanish and Portuguese. These were not included in this literature review due to language barriers. An account of Jewish history up to present days is provided briefly by [Flesler et al. 2011](#).

they do not have at their home environment (Cohen, 2004). International and domestic tourism is on the rise due to diversity and divergence (Singh, 2009). Many studies appear to rely implicitly on the assumption that the existence of diverse sites and the desire of visitors for diverse experiences is at the heart of the research of tourism. Studies concentrating on tourism marketing seem to consider diversity in a more explicit manner (Hoffman, 2003; Castro et. al., 2007). Morpeth (2000) raised the issue of diversity with respect to the combination of wine and cycling tourism.

The scarcity of studies on the feature of destination diversity is reflected in [Ma and Hassink \(2013\)](#) question raised at the end of their study on evolutionary tourism area development: "To what extent do the heterogeneity and diversity of tourism products and sectors impact the evolution of tourism areas?" (p. 107). It is quite strange that the issue of diversity has not been overtly investigated in the topic of 'tourism area life cycle' despite extensive research devoted to this topic for more than thirty years. In this study the diversity of the JHT product available in the sample of Spanish city will be examined as a part of the paper's objectives.

A discussion relevant to the diversity issue surrounds the debate over authenticity versus commodification (e.g., Halewood and Hannam, 2001; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006). Although heterogeneity in the presentation of a product in various locations does not make it authentic, homogeneity of the touristic experience comes close to commodification. In congruence with the focus of this paper on tourism in religious sites, special attention should be paid to the different meaning of authenticity prevailing among tourists engaged in religious tourism as pointed out by Belhassen, Caton, and Stewart, 2008.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in this study is qualitative in nature and relies heavily on subjective judgment. The study is based on data collected via personal visits paid to twenty towns and cities throughout Spain between May

and August 2011³. All these places are members of the RED organization. Visits were coordinated with representatives of RED at each location with help extended by RED's central office in Gerona. Visits were at least one day long devoted for data collection. These data were obtained in the following ways:



Figure 1: Municipalities included in the survey of places offering Jewish Heritage Tourism.

a) Personal interview with a professional from the tourism office or the cultural department. These professionals were usually senior employees of the local authority. Each interview lasted about an hour. This was an open

³ At the time of the survey RED included 21 municipalities only. Palma de Majorca was excluded from the survey due to insufficient resources.

interview started with introducing my research interest in Jewish heritage tourism. Questions were related to supply side of tourism attractions and demand-side of visitors and their origins. These inquiries were associated first with the city's tourism sites in general and with Jewish related artifacts in particular. Other questions were related to the historical development, offer of Jewish cultural events, festivals, and Jewish cuisine, and finally asking about funding sources and the motives of being involved in nurturing Jewish heritage.

b) The interviews were ended by filling up a one page questionnaire summarizing the conversation in a structured manner, focusing on the significance of the Jewish heritage attractions to the local tourism industry.

c) Interviews were followed by a guided tour to the Jewish related sites. The tours were guided either by a representative of the tourism office or by a professional English speaking tour guide. Average tours lasted between 3 to 4 hours covering all Jewish artifacts.

d) Most often the guided tour was followed by a repeat self-tour to absorb further impressions, observe visitors' behavior, and take photos.

e) Collecting brochures, maps and other publications prepared for free distribution by the tourism office in order to evaluate the coverage of the Jewish related attractions in the cities' printed material. Likewise, this coverage was later examined in the cities' official websites.

Information collected via these procedures enabled triangulation and validation of data. These methods allowed for a detailed examination of the Jewish related resources in each and every city on the one hand, and, on the other, provided a broad view of the nature of the JHP by comparing the components found in all sampled places.

The findings presented next focus on the tangible Jewish artifacts only⁴. It should be restated that the assessment of the tourism product in the various municipalities is based on subjective judgment made by the author. The

⁴ As mentioned earlier, towns and cities affiliated with RED have a rich program of intangible Jewish cultural activities like lectures, shows, music concerts and the like. These activities deserve as special study.

findings are coded and summarized in Table 1. This summary is the basis for evaluating the nature of the tangible Jewish heritage product in Spain.

4. FINDINGS

The JHP in Spain is based on relics from the Middle Ages about five to ten centuries back in time, prior to the expulsion of Jews in 1492 by decree of the Catholic Monarchs. The relics have several characteristics in common. They are based on identifying major communal assets on the one hand and pinpointing some private or minor relics on the other. Communal assets include Jewish quarters composed of streets and alleys lined-up in the past by dwellings of Jews, structures used for synagogues and ritual baths (Miqwe), and hillsides used as Jewish cemeteries. Private and minor relics are composed of such diverse artifacts as private houses of prominent Jewish figures, Hebrew inscriptions or symbols curved on stone, Mezuzah holes in the doorpost, and more. Jewish quarters are most often signposted, Jewish symbols such as Menorah and Star of David are used for decoration, and streets and squares are named after historic Jewish personas or simply as Juderia (Jewish), Synagogue, or Jerusalem. In some places these features, among other things, constitute collection of artifacts exhibited in a Jewish museum. All Jewish quarters share placement of special bronze symbols (about 10x10 cm. designed by RED) carrying the word Sefarad (Spain) in Hebrew, fixed on the Jewish quarters' street pavements.

All in all, Jewish heritage in Spain and elsewhere involves re-inventing a product composed of dormant relics characterized by small non-monumental exhibits, having mainly educational no-fun nature that appeals to special interest groups of tourists who have some nostalgic links with or at least curiosity for the Jewish culture. The Jewish heritage product in Spain and Europe is usually promoted by cultures foreign to the Jewish faith (Gruber, 2002). Its development may often encounter states of cognitive dissonance vis-à-vis the local culture (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Flesler and Pérez Melgosa, 2010). These qualities both from the supply and demand

standpoints make Jewish Heritage a clear candidate for being marked as niche tourism (Novelli, 2005; Dinis and Krakover, 2014).

Table 1 lists the main tangible elements presented in the sampled cities as part of their JHP. These elements are ordered according to their frequency of appearance among the cities; the more cases with zero (meaning absence of such element) the further the column is placed to the right. Based on these frequencies it is clear that the demarcation of the Jewish quarter is considered as a necessary condition. Next are Jewish museums and synagogues as focal points. Then are the endorsement of local Jewish personas who lived in the town in the past, and identification of some other minor artifacts. Judged by frequencies, less importance is allotted to statues, squares and gardens named after Jewish personas, and to the restoration of Jewish cemeteries. There is no doubt, however, that cities having more of these elements are offering richer experience of and better familiarity with their Jewish heritage product.

In the next paragraphs each and every element is reviewed and scores are given according to the elements presence in the cities as of summer 2011. These scores are based on the author's subjective judgment. As a byproduct a summary of these scores facilitates a rough assessment and ranking of the intensity or richness of the JHP in the towns and cities involved.

Jewish Quarters - Juderias: A common feature to all surveyed municipalities is the presence of a Jewish quarter. These quarters were identified in the cities based on popular knowledge and documents preserved in churches and other public depositories. Nowadays the houses in the Jewish quarters are occupied by local non-Jew residents, shops, cafes, restaurants, and other services. The streets and structure facades are nicely restored to create an antique atmosphere. In many towns there are two Jewish quarters – old and new.

The posture and demarcation of the quarters vary among the municipalities. Based on a subjective assessment of these two elements the cities are classified into three groups. Places where the Jewish quarter is clearly marked and has a significant posture and presence are scored 3. Other places scored 2 when the quarter is either not appropriately marked or

it lacks significant posture. When both properties are poorly present it is scored 1. It should be noted that almost in all places the Juderia is marked by specially designed street name plaques and the direction to the Juderia is signposted.

Three problems were identified with respect to the reliance on the Juderia as the main representation for Jewishness: a) the Juderias are most often not distinctively different from the neighboring streets and alleys. b) Unless the specially designed street name plaques and specific Jewish symbols implanted in the Juderia there is no story to tell about the quarters' streets. And c) the diversity of Juderias among the towns and cities associated with RED is not strong enough to justify visiting many of these places.

	Jewish quarter	Jewish museum	Synagogue	Jewish persona	Other artifacts	Square/garden	Jewish cemetery	Total score
Ávila	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	10
Barcelona	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	10
Besalu	2	1	2	0	5	0	0	10
Cáceres	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
Calahorra	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cordoba	3	5	5	5	0	2	0	20
Estella-Lizarra	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	8
Gerona	3	5	2	2	2	0	0	14
Hervas	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	6
Jaén	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	8
León	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	5
Monf. de Lemos	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	6
Oviedo	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Plasencia	3	0	0	0	2	0	5	10
Ribadavia	3	2	2	0	2	0	0	9
Segovia	3	5	2	2	0	0	5	17
Tarazona	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	8
Toledo	3	5	5	5	0	0	0	18
Tortosa	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	7
Tudela	3	1	2	5	0	2	0	13
# of zeros	0	6	7	8	9	16	18	

Table 1: Components of the Jewish heritage product in 20 municipalities in Spain, 2011
 Source: Own elaboration. Scores are explained in text.

Jewish museums: Jewish museums appear to be an important component of the JHP. Only six cities lack any form of Jewish artifacts central exhibition. The cities having museums are classified into four types of displays. Gerona, Toledo, Cordoba, and Segovia have relatively large and impressive museum. These are given subjectively and arbitrarily a score of 5. Four other places have a unique display of a smaller and more limited scale. These places scored 2. Six places have something on exhibit, however it is rather limited in one way or another. For instance, Besalu and Hervas do not have museums, however, visitors to the tourist info center are overwhelmed with Jewish related plaques and symbols. In Tudela and Tarazona small displays of plaques and artifacts present Jewish personas, Jewish life cycle and Jewish Holydays annual cycle. In Avila the Centro de Interpretación del Misticismo is partly devoted to Jewish mysticism. Likewise in Estella-Lizarra bits and pieces of Jewish history are presented in the historical museum. These places scored 1. The Jewish museum is regarded as a focal point to the Jewish tourism experience. The diversity among the different places is jeopardized by repeating too often the themes of Jewish annual cycle and Jewish life cycle.

Synagogues: Synagogues used to be and they are still very significant institutions in Jewish tradition. These are major focal points of interest to visitors coming specifically to see the synagogue, or to those strolling in the street(s) of the Jewish quarters. Twelve towns and cities are engaged in portrayal of a synagogue in one way or another. However, only two cities can boast with well-established synagogues, Cordoba and Toledo. These synagogues are given arbitrarily and subjectively a score of 5. In ten places the presence of a synagogue is less established and/or does not appear as such. These places were assigned a score of 2 since from a touristic point of view they have a story to tell. A score of 2 was assigned to Besalu synagogue. Although its location is well established however only its floor plan

surrounded by low walls has survived. Eight other places do not have synagogues in their itinerary.

Due to the centrality of the synagogues to the JHT experience the narratives of the lesser established synagogues are presented in some details. In two places – Barcelona and Ribadavia – private entrepreneurs have marked a structure as synagogue (in Barcelona it functions as a Jewish museum). Local tourism offices claim however that these are fake and strong evidence leads to other locations which are still not open. In Segovia, Jaen and Estella-Lizarra⁵ interested tourists are directed to churches that presumably – by their architecture, documented evidence and popular tradition – used to be Jewish synagogues. However, nowadays Jewish symbols are missing altogether⁶. The Tudela could-be-synagogue is located on the side of the cloister of the main Cathedral. Its simple structure as well as an elevated area presumably used as women's wing makes it a candidate of being used as Jewish synagogue although its location within the cloister is very unusual.

Synagogues of Avila represent an interesting case. Sinagoga del Pocillo is marked on the city's tourist map as a synagogue however it is a private house stripped off any Jewish symbol. It is not only that it is not open to visitors but those who follow the map to the site feel disappointed. The other synagogue used to be the Rabbi's house and it is now occupied by a boutique hotel named Hospederia la Sinagoga. Here Jewish symbols are used for lobby decoration, and rooms are named after prominent pre-expulsion Jewish citizens. In Gerona and Monforte de Lemos (Galicia) there are no synagogues. However in both places tour guides point to the location which is probably the location of the synagogue. In Gerona it is located within the Jewish Museum complex while in Monforte de Lemos it is at rubbles behind a gated yard. In summary, each synagogue has a different story behind it. In

⁵ In Segovia and Jaen they serve as active churches while in Estella-Lizarra it is utilized as a museum. In Segovia I was told there is evidence to another, better marked, synagogue located within a school, however it is not open to visitors.

⁶ This is also the case with Santa Maria la Blanca, the second synagogue open for visitors in Toledo.

this sense the different stories of these places of worship help to increase the diversity among the sampled cities.

Jewish personas: Twelve of the towns and cities engaged in JHT endorse a prominent Jewish persona who lived in the place in the past for at least part of his life. This persona might be a prominent Rabbi, a prominent scholar, diplomat, financier and tax collector, or in one case a famous traveler. Three cities went as far as to erect a statue to commemorate their Jewish persona. These cities – Cordoba, Toledo, and Tudela – scored 5 in this category. Eight other places commemorate a prominent Jewish persona by naming a city square, city garden, a street, or a museum after him. These places score 2. Eight cities still did not identify or do not publically commemorate their Jewish figures. The Jewish personas also act to increase diversity among the cities, though since most visitors are not familiar with these figures a detailed display of their biography is required.

Other artifacts: This category is diverse by definition. Therefore, cities and towns belonging to RED should put a greater emphasis on the display of relics falling under the definition of other artifacts. In this category only one town was found to deserve a score of 5. This is Besalu due to its uniquely restored Miquwe (ritual bath). Other places were given a score of 2 due to minor artifacts like Mezuzah holes, Hebrew inscription on walls or pavements, and the like. Nine places were found to be devoid of any significant artifact in addition to the other marked categories.

Squares and Gardens named after Jewish Personas: Four towns and cities went as far as naming squares or gardens in tribute to the famous Jewish persona who lived in town in the past. These places scored 2 on this criterion. This category is separated from the Jewish persona category because it makes a different impact in terms of the visitors experience. Gardens or squares posting a naming plaque generate an extra place to stop by, take photographs, and talk about this person's biography and contribution. Yet, in terms of scores, it is considered a little less than commissioning and placing a special statue.

Jewish Cemeteries: Unlike other places in Europe where Jewish burials were carried out just decades ago in Spain the cemeteries are dormant for

centuries. Actually, only two places are endowed with marked and well-preserved cemeteries: Segovia and Plasencia (scored 5). Several places – the best known is Barcelona - have a nearby hill named Mont Juic (Jews mountain), a name indicating the existence of a Jewish burial site. These places are not developed yet to accommodate visitors. It should be noted, however, that even in the two towns where the cemeteries are well-preserved their accessibility for tourists is not ideal. In both places they are located across a valley on a hill facing the city. They are certainly not a part of the tourists regular itinerary.

Diversity: Analysis of the scores provided in Table 1 seems to suggest that the trap of homogeneity of the JHP has been successfully avoided. There are no two places with the same sequence of numbers. Furthermore, when it comes to Jewish personas and squares or gardens dedicated in their tribute, they are most often different personas having different biographies⁷. The 'other artifacts' variable also introduces a great deal of diversity. Synagogues' architecture and histories vary from place to place. It is only when it comes to the architecture of the Jewish quarters and the design of exhibits in the Jewish museums where more attention should be paid so as avoid the trap of homogeneity. Such cautionary measures should be applied by the RED organization who oversees the entire network of cities.

The ranking of the cities by the total score (Table 1 last column) also testifies on the diversity among the municipalities at the time of the survey. The range of scores runs between 1 for Calahorra to 20 for Cordoba. The cities with scores above 10 are Cordoba, Toledo, Segovia, Gerona, and Tudela, in descending order. These cities are listed among the seven founders of RED. Five cities share a score of 10. These are: Avila, Barcelona, Besalu, Plasencia, and Tortosa, each with a different mix of the JHT components. Eight places are having scores between 5 and 9, while Obeido and Calahorra scored 3 and 1, respectively. It should be reminded, however, that these scores are based on subjective judgment of reality and subjective

⁷ Exceptions are Rabbi Moshe de Leon, Menahen ben Saruque, and Rabbi Hisday Ibn Shaprut who are commemorated in two places, and Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi whose name is given to squares in two cities.

assessment of significance assigned by tourists to the various touristic elements. Also, these scores are true to the date of the survey and they can be fairly easily changed, for instance, by erecting a statue in honor of the locally respected Jewish persona or naming a square or garden in his/her tribute.

5. DISCUSSION

The JHT product as developed in Spain represents a unique and interesting case of tourism product development. On the one hand it is a singular product as referred to by Caffyn and Lutz, (1999) for heritage tourism or Bruwer (2003) for wine tourism. On the other hand it was built in a process indicative of the production function with various inputs and outputs reminding the model suggested by Smith (1994). Inputs are the various physical components making up the JHP from the urban fabric of the historic Jewish quarters to museums, synagogues, revival of past Jewish personas, and other minor relics. In Jansen-Verbeke (2009) terminology these constitute the hardware of tourism development. The other components referred to by Jansen-Verbeke are software, orgware and shareware – all effectively present in the revival of JHT in Spain as suggested by Russo and Romagosa (2010).

The inputs labeled as 'software' include many intangible elements facilitating attachment of meaning to the physical features by telling their stories, signposting, advertising, and marketing. The 'orgware' stands for whatever is involved in setting-up and running the organization that activates these developments. On the output side the investments and efforts involved generate opportunities not only for unique visitor experiences, employment, and income, but also for what Jansen-Verbeke calls 'shareware', meaning the ability to share knowledge and experience among all partners incorporated in the organization ([Russo and Romagosa, 2010](#)). Referring to RED, It should be noted that this paper concentrated on the physical components of the JHT product (the hardware). The relationships of the other three building blocks – software, orgware and shareware - to the JHT product as developed by RED deserve separate studies.

An additional task assigned to RED and its associated municipalities is overcoming potential antagonism based on cultural dissonance that may arise from the restoration of Jewish past in Christian environments (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). Such a reaction was documented by Flesler and Pérez Melgosa (2010) with respect to changing emphasis of a play staged in Hervas during the days of the Jewish festival. Potential criticism is pacified by RED and its representatives in the different towns by expanding the meaning of the JHT product to include two historical perspectives. One alludes to evils done to Jews and the necessity to face this chapter in Spanish history regardless of uneasiness involved. The second refers to a wider framework of contributing to the revival of the Golden Ages atmosphere wherein, arguably, *Tres Culturas* (three cultures - Muslims, Jews, and Christians) were living together in harmony. These suggested explanations refer, however, to the realm of intangibilities which should be studied in a separate paper.

As referred to in the literature review section homogeneity of a tourism product offered in multi-locational setting may lead to commodification and loss of interest among potential visitors (Halewood and Hannam, 2001). The risk of increasing homogeneity and uniformity is a-priori greater when a multi-locational tourism enterprise is controlled by a central organization. A qualitative assessment of the Spanish JHT endeavor applied to the physical elements revealed that such a risk cannot be dismissed. Two central elements in the built environment of the JHT – the Jewish quarters and Jewish museums – very often portray similarities that in certain cases may be regarded as repetitive. Special attention should be given to diversify decoration, symbols, and exhibits so as to avoid falling into the trap of homogeneity. In addition, responsibility for the task of diversification should be relegated to the local actors. They should apply greater emphasis to develop the unique characteristics of their specific location.

Two examples that spring up to mind for introducing uniqueness are Tudela and Calahorra. In Tudela an emphasis can be given to the voyage and character of the great traveler Benjamin of Tudela. He has taken and documented a trip to the Jewish communities throughout south Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa in the year 1165, preceding Marko Polo by

almost one hundred years. Calahorra can take advantage of the biblical female figures depicted in their cathedral and try to open a museum wherein these figures are exhibited in greater coverage. Acting this way may substantially increase diversity among member cities associated with Red. [Although Belhassen, Caton, and Stewart \(2008\)](#) claimed that pilgrims are less sensitive to commodification, it should be noted that visitors to the JHT sites in Spain do not belong to the pious religious groups and therefore may be more critical about the lack of diversity.

Without any doubt, the generation of the JHP has impacted the tourism environment in the surveyed cities and towns by changing their destination image and destination personality (Hosany et al., 2006). In most places this new product is an addition to the available tourism resources they possess. In these places the motivation of adding the JHP emerged from their wish to diversify the tourism environment. In several small places the JHP is the only tourism resource they offer. This product is utilized to generate a tourism environment that appeals not only to domestic visitors but also to international tourists. Furthermore, in some places, the development of the JHP stimulated the environmental rehabilitation of old city quarters that have otherwise been in poor physical conditions.

As indicated in the introduction to this paper many countries in Europe are engaged in preservation and renewal of JHT sites (Ashworth, 1996; Gruber, 2002). My personal visits in several European countries, as well as Google search, led me to the conclusion that there is probably no other project comparable in scope and organization to that undertaken by RED in Spain. In 2011 Portugal has established an organization named 'REDE de Judiarias de Portugal' which is a close duplicate of the Spanish example (Rede de Judiarias de Portugal, 2013). However, they are still in their initial stages of organization ([Krakover, 2012](#))⁸. Another country that has nicely organized the presentation of its Jewish heritage sites is Romania ([Romaniatourism, 2013](#)). It is unknown, however, whether or not Romania has a national organization

⁸ Personal interview with the organization's Secretary General Mr. Jorge Manuel da Silva Patrão, May 2012.

that works in tandem with the various municipalities recognized in the website as having Jewish heritage resources.

It will be pretentious trying to explain in this paper the reason why the Iberian countries are better organized in presenting their JHP. In the way of a hypothesis one may relate the Iberian advances to the time lapsed since Jews were using the properties involved. While in most European countries synagogues, cemeteries, public and private houses were used by Jewish citizens until the Holocaust in the 1940s and even later, in Spain and Portugal all properties have been abandoned by their Jewish owners more than five centuries ago. Since there is no risk of properties being claimed at present in the Iberian Peninsula it is legally less problematic to reclaim these assets for the goal of developing JHT.

It should be noted that the RED organization is involved not only in the salvage of tangible assets but also in promoting many sorts of intangible activities. These are seminars, classes, and lectures related to Judaism, Sefaradic music and Jewish film festivals as well as Sefaradi food and culinary events. Furthermore, special events are held in the European day of Jewish culture (early September), and in some places this lasts for more than one day. From my perspective as of summer 2011, most of these intangible activities are designed for the local and regional population. In some places like Hervas and Ribadavia Jewish festivals are held for three consecutive days and they draw visitors from wider circles. Currently it seems that international visitors are mainly attracted by the tangible assets which were singled out for analysis in this paper. It is reasonable to assume that developing intangibles for international audience requires a longer time frame for organization and branding.

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to explore the evolution of supply side aspects in the process of an emerging new tourism attraction. The research has focused on studying the JHT as a unique product. The study aimed to assess the physical elements composing the JHP and to examine their

diversity in a sample of twenty Spanish towns and cities. These towns and cities are members of RED serving as their central organization. The affiliation with a central actor raised the question to what extent different localities are affected by the central guidance so as to generate a homogeneous product of a repetitive nature.

A personal visit to twenty towns and cities was undertaken during summer 2011. A survey of all artifacts related to JHT made during these visits provided the data for the results reported in this paper. The results indicate that the JHT product is composed of the following elements listed in descending order of their appearance: Jewish quarter, Jewish museum, a synagogue or a story related to this institution, a local Jewish persona, other mostly minor artifacts, square or garden named after a Jewish persona, and Jewish cemetery. Not all places have all elements and elements of the same type are not necessarily at the same level of development. Therefore, different places have different product mix. Places endowed with more and better developed elements offer the tourist a richer experience of JHT.

Analysis of the diversity of the JHP among the towns reveals a tendency towards homogeneity in the visual appearance of the Jewish quarters which is the backbone of the JHP. Likewise, museums, especially the small ones, show a tendency of repetitive exhibits. Nevertheless, certain elements such as the synagogues and their story, the local Jewish personas of the past and other minor artifacts tend to portray greater heterogeneity. In addition, the differences found in the product-mix among the cities help to increase their diversity. It is recommended to exercise a greater care in preserving and emphasizing differences among cities and towns especially those belonging to the same geographical cluster. In the way of analogy these findings seem to equally apply to other niche tourism products such as wine tourism, rural tourism, or other religions' tourism of non-monumental nature.

Finally, it should be reminded that this paper relied on subjective assessment done by the author. The results reported in this study await validation or refinements via studies based on other research methodologies.

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