

Globalization and the Tourist Complex in Tobruk

Introduction:

There is a worldwide consensus that political processes, events, and activities in today's world have a global dimension. There is also an agreement that globalization is a historical phenomenon resulting from human development.

Globalization means the elimination of all economic, scientific, and knowledge barriers between nations so that the world becomes a gigantic common market. This market is composed of several other markets each possessing specific qualities and specifications reflecting its regional particulars. This is due to the spread of new technologies in societies that are still in a stage of pre-modernism. This spread has been reflected as cultural changes in these societies.

Globalization and Third World Countries

Many movements have been initiated in third world countries regarding globalization. The most important of which is the movement against globalization. This movement may be against the path of history because isolation is no longer an option and no country can stay outside the circle of time and history.

There is another movement that accepts globalization without reservation and considers it the language of the coming age. Other movements are critical and try to understand the laws governing globalization so that it may adopt to them.

Globalization has come to revive and stress the globality of the liberal economic ideas that prevailed in the eighteenth century but it also tries to modify the role of the state and restricts that role to keeping the internal and external peace and security and justice. This lead to the creation of the third path or new liberalism. Therefore although globalization is based on the private sector, it did not abandon the state but still believe in its existence. But, this belief is subject to the prior belief of the state itself in the existence of private economic enterprise. It is also subject to the state giving private enterprise the necessary facilities and assurances to allow it to play an active role in running the economic life. This is as if staying in the seats of power of the state in this global age is dependant on the state giving its total support to private enterprise.

Economic success in the transition economies in its links to the world industrial framework depends three principle criteria:

1. Type of organizational and structural reform and policies.
2. Ability to attract external investment.
3. Economic freedom in external dealing.

The main condition for success in economic transformation is the ability of the government in realizing a degree of economic stability before social patience is exhausted. Efforts to catch up with world trends cannot succeed without free interaction with world markets.

Libya, as an example of third world countries that mostly adopted closed socialist systems that led to the disappearance of effective government institutions. By adopting a directed economic system, Libya has found itself with a weak or non-existent private sector.

Despite the need of Third World countries to enter into the age of modernism and globalization in an effective and contributive manner, they feel the need for protecting their national identity and their cultural heritage. This is the battle for cultural survival that marks the current period. It is our belief that it is possible to actively utilize the cultural diversity in the Arab World, of which Libya is a member, to enrich Arab Culture and broaden its domain.

The city of Tobruk

The history of Tobruk goes back to ancient history when it was settled a long time ago. During the Greek time Tobruk was a defensive center for the Greek settlements in Cyrenaica. It was also an important port city for the pilgrims coming to visit the temple of the God Amon in the Oasis of Siwa. At that time Tobruk was known as Antipyrgos.

During Byzantine time the defensive role of Tobruk was further enhanced when Emperor Justenian built a fort that stood for a long time since then.

During Turkish times the city lost a lot of its importance as a defensive location and its only importance became as a port serving the commercial centers in Siwa and Jagboub.

When the Italians occupied Libya in 1911 they returned to Tobruk its important defensive and military role. It was used as an important port and fort and represented the eastern frontier during World War II. During that war the city was involved in many battles named after it. The result of all this military action was the total destruction of the city.

In 1942 the British established a garrison in the city which became a local defensive landmark to this date.

Tobruk is situated in a natural bay east of old Cyrenaica on the coordinates of (2:04:05) North Latitude and (23:58:27) East Longitude. It is connected to the other important coastal cities of Derna, Beida, and Benghazi via the Coastal Road. Its distance from these three cities is 175km, 257km, and 475km respectively. It is also connected to Benghazi via another internal road away from the coast. This road passes through the towns of Tamimi, Mekhili, and other smaller settlements. It is also connected to Jagboub and the desert frontier by a paved road.

As we mentioned earlier, Tobruk is also a border town. It is only 137km from the Egyptian border.

In general Tobruk enjoys an excellent location on a rocky peninsula enclosing a large natural bay that provides a magnificent sea view.

Globalization and the City of Tobruk

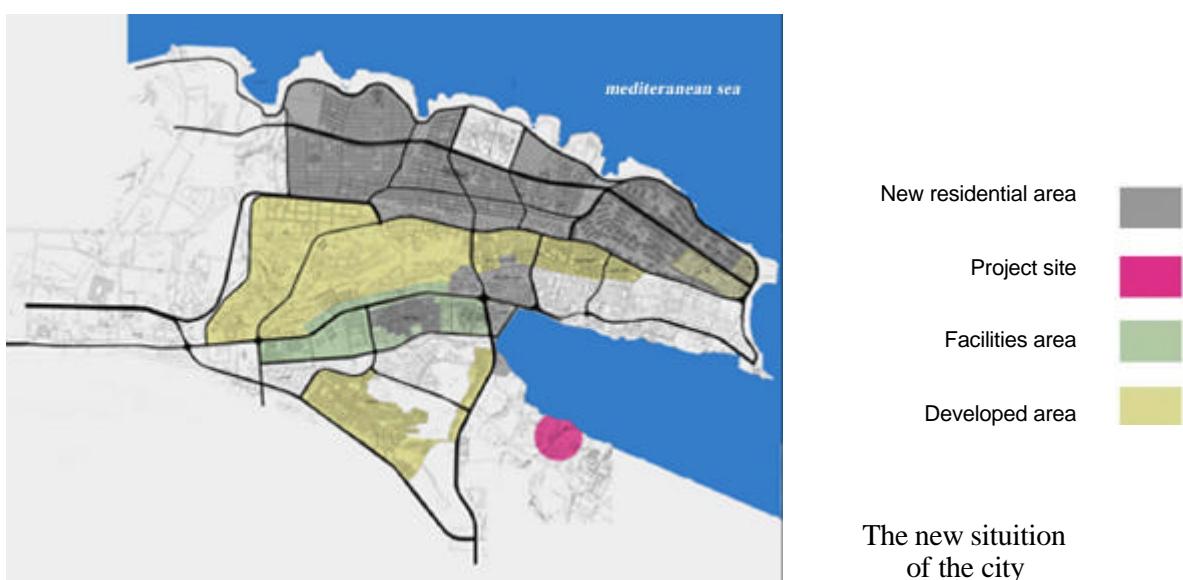
Tobruk represents a study model of third world country cities. It has suffered, and is still suffering from many factors that have affected the city's urban shape, outlook, composition, and development. This is due to the political and economic conditions of the country in the past few decades. Among these influences that affected the city drastically and negatively is

its border location. Its special location near the Egyptian border has turned it into a restricted military city. It, therefore became a minor urban settlement for a small population composed mostly of nomads and transients working on sheep herding and related crafts and professions. This fact has affected the shape and composition of the city negatively. Among these negative effects is the creation of many random neighborhoods in the center and periphery of the city. These random neighborhoods suffer from lack of services and public utilities in spite of the important location and advantages of the city.



Due to the national and international political and economic developments represented by the opening up of the country to the world, the city's master plan has undergone many attempts to correct its deficiencies. These corrections were evident in projects to upgrade the city's drainage and water systems, dealing with the random neighborhoods, the design and construction of major roads, the sea front project, administrative centers, a cultural-religious center, and the upgrading of the general hospital.

It is anticipated that the city will be transformed into an urban center for the district and surrounding region. It will, therefore, provide a higher level of services.



World Tourism

Studies indicate that there is a growing number of tourists who are looking for a tourist service that provides more than the traditional beach holiday. This includes:

- Special interest tourist tours. such visits to archeological sites, mountain excursions, and desert excursions.
- Adventure tour such as desert safaris.
- Special activity tours such as diving.

It is expected that tourism will grow in the countries of the Mediterranean Basin in the period 1995-2020. This region might be divided into two categories:

1. Countries that are experiencing fast rates of growth such as Egypt and Jordan.
2. Countries that are working on rebuilding their deteriorated tourist sectors such as the new countries of the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Albania, and Algeria. Libya may also be classified in this group of countries.

Therefore, growth tourist markets in the beach based tourism will continue its growth and expansion outside Europe. According to the International Tourism Organization the three most important sectors of tourism in the 2000 and beyond are: Beach Tourism, Desert Tourism, and Cultural Tourism.

Libya as a Tourist Location:

From what we have said so far we can say that Libya can provide all the tourist services required by the markets. It could also be said that specialized tourism may provide economic and social benefits that are in line with the cultural and traditions of the Libyan people without the need for intensive group tourism.

The main natural attractions may be summarized as follows:

- Traditional archeological sites.
- Natural desert sites, scenery and the desert historical sites.
- Mountain areas especially the Green Mountain , the Western Mountain and the Acacus Mountains.
- Historical cities that represent wide architectural and cultural historical background.
- Beaches and other marine locations.
- Other tourist resources such as diving, religious sites and hot baths.

In light of this perspective and for the purposes of tourist market development ,Libya may present several advantages for the European tourist market due to the following reasons:

1. Libya is relatively close to Europe which reduces the travel time and expense relative to the competing markets of Asian and Caribbean tourism.
2. Libya provides the possibility of combining beach tourist activities with cultural tourist activities.
3. Libya may present an attraction to tourists for years to come because it is still new and touristically unexplored.

Tourist Activities Suitable to Tobruk

According to the Libyan Tourist Development Master Plan and other studies and as previously mentioned, and due to the distinct coastal location of Tobruk; as well as its proximity to the different archeological, desert, and World War II sites it was determined that Tobruk is suitable for several types of tourist activities in addition to beach tourism. These additional tourist activities may be summarized in the following:

I. Sea Diving

Sea diving is the main beach tourism that represents good prospects in Tobruk. It is well known that the quality of sea diving in Tobruk area is equivalent to that of the French and Corsican area and it is less polluted. In addition to the underwater scenery, there is also the possibility of diving in archeological locations as well as World War II battle field locations.

Europe is expected to be the main source of divers coming to Libya. Estimates show that there are 1.6 Million divers in Europe distributed among the European countries as shown in (Table 1)

Country	Number of Divers
Italy	500,000
Germany	400,000
France	400,000
United Kingdom	80,000
Other European Countries	150,000

Table 1: The Distribution of Divers from European Countries

In this regard, one of the main strategic objectives for developing diving tourism in this area should be the identification of the potential sources of tourists and concentrating the marketing efforts on these sources. There should also be a marketing research effort to identify their requirements and the possible attractions that could be made available to them.

In this regard, the main facilitating factors may be:

- Providing direct or indirect sea transportation
- Choosing the appropriate tourist marketing communication
- Contacts with divers through mail directed at specialized diving clubs or diving magazines or through diving brochures
- Participation in professional diving events and utilizing all available opportunities for public relations in this regard

II. Sea Fishing

Sea fishing and sea tours are two other marketable tourist products in Tobruk. There is a growing sector of European tourists who are increasingly interested in this type of tourism. In

this case a group of tourists will travel by air to a central location where they will take boats or yachts through specific sea routs.

The main success factor in this type of tourism lies in providing a certain amount of adventure which will require well prepared marinas that could be reached after a one day's sailing.

III. Special Interest Sector

The countries of North Africa and the Middle East (particularly Egypt) represent the main competitors to Libya in special interest tourism. For example, in cultural tourism Egypt has attracted 3.7 Million tourists in 1996. About 1.5-2 Million of these tourist are international tourists. Jordan has attracted about 1.0 Million tourists for the first time in 1995. Other countries in the region have been less successful due to some political problems. Statistics regarding this sector are shown in Table 2.

Country	Number of Tourists
Egypt	3.7 Million
Jordan	1.0 Million
Syria	900,000
Lebanon	300,000
Iraq	400,000
Iran	400,000

Table 2: Distribution of the Tourists in Selected Middle Eastern Countries

Because Libya is also a Mediterranean country, it is expected that it will be a major competitor in the region. The major advantage of Libya is that it is a less known tourist location that has a major natural advantage of a long coastal region and a long largely unspoiled beach.

Period	World Tourism Rate of Growth	Mediterranean Tourism Rate of Growth
1995-2000	4.21%	3.27%
2000-2010	4.34%	2.34
2010-2020	4.51%	2.45%

Table 3: Tourist Growth Rate, World and Mediterranean

Year	% of World Tourists
1990	33%
1995	30%
2000	29%
2010	24%
2020	20%

Table 4: Tourism market share of Mediterranean countries in world tourism

Therefore, The Tobruk Tourist Complex Project is considered as required service project and as a project that may effectively contribute to upgrading the tourist facilities for the city and the region.

Due to the size of the project which is estimated to cover an area of approximately 93 Hectares and due to the opportunities that globalization may contribute in trade exchange and the provision of capital investments and cultural exchange, the developers of the project have adopted a new global philosophy and perspective. In other words, this project was considered as a stimulus to internal tourism as well as a tourism attraction to international tourists and hence as a means for attracting international capital investment, financial and cultural exchange.

From this philosophy, there was a study of the link between the tourist commodity offered by the project and by Libya and international tourism as a whole.

The project is both affected and will affect the effective performance of the city and country since it will require the following:

- Reorganizing and restructuring the tourist sector in the country
- Upgrading national and international airports
- Improving transportation networks and means
- Developing and improving tourism promotion schemes such as festivals, exhibitions...etc
- Adopting an intensive public program and tourist promotion through investment in this regard
- Providing supporting services and facilities to the tourist sector

Conclusion:

Taking all the above into consideration, analytical studies were conducted of the project site which provides the following advantages:

1. A very good sea front
2. An old port as part of the site
3. Hills , slope and valleys
4. Proximity to the city center

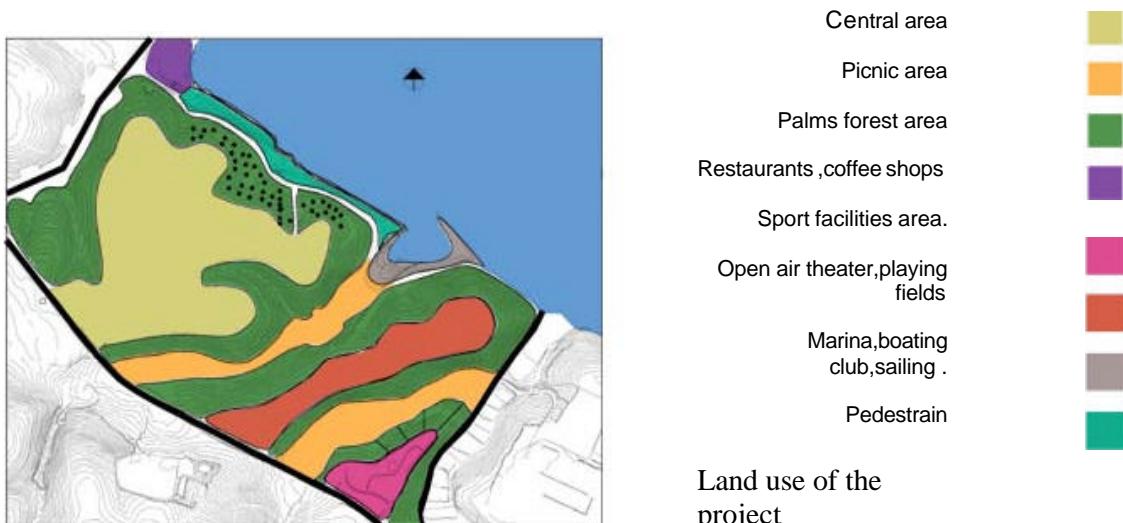


The old port



German memorial of the world war ? dead

The project is now in the conceptual phase and study is now being undertaken to determine the components of the project that will suit the economic, environmental and local conditions and attract tourists at the same time.



For this project to be successful in a country like Libya, still in a stage of pre-modernism and seeking to catch-up with globalization in the shortest time possible while retaining its cultural identity, work has to be accomplished on three levels:

First: On the National Level

The inevitability of reform of the administrative , political, educational, and training and development systems to create a well trained workforce which will be able to adopt to the challenges of globalization, developing policies of technology transfer and utilization, and achieving true democratic reform. Political reform is a main prerequisite to all of the above mentioned reforms since it is the basic requirement of all internal reform strategy. This political reform includes a transformation toward the gradual and cumulative shift to true democracy, achievement of social justice, supremacy of the law, and the fight against political and administrative corruption.

Second: On the Regional Level

The need for activating the structure and policies of regional cooperation and integration between Arab countries and Third World countries since the best way to deal with the challenges the globalization confronting all of these countries may prompt them to work as a group to able to face these challenges.

Third: On the International Level

The existing structure and policies of the World Trade Organization provides a wide framework of world trade but this structure is still influenced by rules that were created for a smaller environment when international trade relations were limited. Therefore, there is a need to establish a new global system that is more just and democratic where Third World countries, including Arab countries, are partners and not just marginal entities. All of this should be within the frame work of reforming globalization itself and helping Third World to deal with it and with its chronic problems.

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