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HARMONISING ARISTOTLE'S VIRTUES: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM THROUGH THE LENS OF HOSPITALITY

Abstract: The paper explores the intersection of accessibility, hospitality, and the rights of people with disabilities in the tourism environment. It employs a mixed methodological approach, including literature review, document analysis, expert interviews, statistical data analysis, and system dynamics modelling, to shed light on the challenges and opportunities in accessible tourism. The study underscores the need to foster inclusive environments in tourism, drawing on Aristotle's concept of equity, which advocates for the fair and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities as the basis for creating good for others. The built CLD model, a testament to the enduring relevance of classical human values in the context of eudaemonia-quality of life and tourism, presents solutions for a future of human systems thinking where equal opportunities, the overall tourism experience, the experience of people with disabilities, and the quality of life are significantly improved.

Keywords: accessible tourism, quality of life, hospitality, Nichomaean ethics, system dynamics modelling.

1. Introduction

Accessible tourism, often overlooked, is one of the most important types of tourism. At its core, it is about hospitality, about welcoming all people, including those with disabilities. This research aims to understand the barriers people with disabilities face and how we, as professionals in the field, can contribute to better understanding and adaptability. It is crucial to recognise that the biggest problem is prejudice against people with disabilities. Equally important is the issue of generalisation, where all people are lumped together, and the lack of attention to more vulnerable groups.

This research is deeply rooted in Aristotle's values, which form the bedrock of hospitality in accessible tourism. As Aristotle eloquently states in Nicomachean Ethics, 'Virtue lies in our power, and the same applies to evil; for where we have the power to act, we have the power not to act.' This profound insight guides our understanding and application of hospitality in the context of accessible tourism, making our research academically rigorous, deeply relevant, and impactful.

Aristotle's insights into virtue ethics provide a valuable framework for promoting ethical excellence and enhancing the hospitality experience for people with disabilities in accessible tourism. Rooted in cultivating

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habits that shape character and behaviour, the Aristotelian virtues provide a holistic approach to ensuring all travellers' quality of life and dignity. This aligns with contemporary notions of human flourishing within the tourism industry.

The concept of eudaemonia is central to Aristotle's philosophy, which goes beyond mere happiness to encompass a deeper sense of fulfilment and purpose. Applied to accessible tourism, eudaemonia underscores the industry's commitment to promoting the quality of life and inclusion of people with disabilities, ensuring they have equal access to travel experiences and opportunities for personal growth.

Aristotle identifies two categories of virtues, intellectual and moral, each crucial in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment within the hospitality sector. Intellectual virtues, such as practical wisdom, are essential for understanding the diverse needs and preferences of travellers with disabilities and are acquired through training and experience in accessible tourism practices. Moral virtues, such as courage and justice, are also essential for cultivating a culture of respect, fairness and equity in serving people with disabilities as valued guests.

Among the moral virtues, four cardinal virtues emerge as paramount: courage, justice, practical wisdom and temperance (Papouli, 2019). Courage empowers hospitality professionals to challenge preconceived notions and barriers to accessibility and to stand up for the rights and dignity of travellers with disabilities in the face of adversity. Justice guides the development of policies and practices that prioritise accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that all guests have equal opportunities to enjoy their travel experiences.

Practical wisdom guides ethical decision-making in accessible tourism, enabling hospitality professionals to address complex challenges with empathy and integrity.

Temperance, the virtue of moderation, promotes self-awareness and self-care among industry professionals, guarding against burnout and ensuring sustainable practices in accessible services. Incorporating the Aristotelian virtues into hospitality practices for accessible tourism requires a nuanced understanding of their application in real-world contexts. Hospitality professionals demonstrate courage by actively seeking opportunities to improve accessibility and advocating for the rights of travellers with disabilities. Justice guides the development of inclusive policies and infrastructure, ensuring that accessibility is integrated into every aspect of the travel experience.

Practical wisdom informs the design of personalised accommodations and services that meet the diverse needs of guests with disabilities, enhancing their overall satisfaction and enjoyment. Temperance encourages hospitality professionals to prioritise their quality of life and emotional resilience, fostering a positive and supportive environment for guests and staff. Aristotle's cardinal virtues ultimately provide a timeless framework for promoting ethical excellence and enhancing the hospitality experience in accessible tourism. By embracing these virtues, hospitality professionals and people uphold ethical standards and contribute to the quality of life of people with disabilities, ensuring they can fully participate in and enjoy the benefits of travel.

2. Methodology

This study aimed to explore the influence of hospitality on accessible tourism and the management of people with barriers. A mixed methods approach was adopted. This involved a comprehensive review of the relevant academic literature, followed by a semi-structured interview with an individual knowledgeable in accessible tourism and a method of systems dynamics. We built a causal-loop model of Aristotlean virtues and

their interdependencies with a state of eudaemonia. A systematic review of academic articles, focusing on qualitative and analytical studies examining the intersection of hospitality, accessible tourism and the experiences of people with barriers, was undertaken in the first phase of the research. The search strategy included electronic databases and relevant scientific journals. Keywords such as 'accessible tourism', 'hospitality', 'barriers' and 'disability' were used to identify relevant literature. The articles were screened based on their relevance to the research question, and those that met the inclusion criteria were selected for in-depth analysis. Following the literature review, a semi-structured interview was conducted with an expert in the field of accessible tourism. The interviewee's extensive experience and expertise in addressing accessibility challenges within the tourism and hospitality industry were used as the basis for selection. The interview aimed to gain insight into the practical aspects of providing hospitality to people with disabilities. This included challenges faced, best practices and potential areas for improvement. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed responses regarding the impact of hospitality on making tourism experiences accessible and accommodating people with disabilities. The data from the literature review were analysed thematically to identify key themes, trends, and gaps in the existing literature. The findings were synthesised to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on the hospitality sector and accessible tourism. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and emergent themes. Triangulating the findings from the literature review and interview increased the validity and reliability of the causal loop model in a frame of system dynamics built from the elements of Aristotelian virtues, which were also taken into concern for this research interview.

3. Accessible tourism

Accessibility has long been a concept often taken for granted or not given enough attention. The origins of accessibility date back to 1960, when the first Paralympic Games were organised (Darcy et al., 2020). Prior to the Paralympic Games, hotels did not pay attention to people with different types of disabilities, as there was no act to define at least the basic needs for accessibility. However, due to the organisation of the Paralympic Games, organisers and hoteliers were obliged to ensure accessibility for all participants. Restaurants, hotels and streets were made more accessible, especially for wheelchair users. As the authors Darcy et al. (2020) state, accessibility has only been maintained for the Paralympic Games, and people with disabilities have not been highlighted at all in the history of tourism, as they have not been able to travel due to inaccessible destinations.

An important fact is that the 1946 Declaration of Human Rights already dictates that everyone has equal rights to leisure, freedom and rest, without distinction of any kind. Between 1975 and 1976, the United Nations published a document dictating the rights of all persons with disabilities. They also announced that 1981 would be declared the World Year of Disability. During this period, the problems of individuals with disabilities began to be highlighted, simultaneously stimulating the development of accessible tourism.

Accessible tourism started to develop more rapidly in the early 20th century. In 2016, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) announced that the theme for World Tourism Day would be accessible tourism. This decision highlighted the importance of tourism development and the need to respect human rights, which dictate that everyone has the right to enjoy and travel. The debate on accessible tourism has universal relevance as it is a human

rights issue (Harju-Myllyaho & Jutila, 2016). As Aristotle already states in the Nicomachean Ethics, justice is the only virtue by which we create some good for others, as reflected in our attitude towards those around us (Aristotle, 2002). So, to summarise, just following Aristotle, we should all take a broader view and ensure accessibility and inclusiveness for all.

3.1. The scope and importance of accessible tourism

Accessible tourism involves more people with disabilities than just wheelchair users, which is what most people think of. It includes wheelchair users, deaf and hard of hearing people, blind and partially sighted people, older people, families with young children, people with intellectual disabilities and people with severe allergies. Currently, 10-20% of the world's population lives with a disability, and by 2050 this figure is expected to rise to 25-30%, or nearly 2 billion people (World Health Organization and World Bank, 2011). This is a very large proportion of the total population, which means that there should be a strong focus on accessibility itself. Some regions, particularly in Asia, have already started to develop more accessible infrastructure as populations age faster and, therefore, need more accessible cities.

3.2. Historical focus and evolution of terminology

In the past, the focus was only on people with obvious mobility impairments or other outwardly visible disabilities. The focus was mainly on wheelchair users and blind and partially sighted people using white canes. However, this focus did not include all other people with different disabilities, including the elderly, the deaf and hard of hearing, and families with young children. The main problem was an inappropriate terminology that emphasised only the medical perspective of disability, focusing mainly on external,

visible disabilities while ignoring the social discourse of disability. The social discourse of disability involves the removal of barriers for people with disabilities and the provision of equal rights for people without disabilities (Barnes, 2000). Because of this misnomer, the researchers created a term for a specific type of tourism to ensure the inclusion of all people with disabilities. Eventually, the terms 'accessible tourism' and 'tourism for all' were coined (Michopoulou et al., 2015). From the non-existent term 'tourism for people with disabilities', the term 'accessible tourism' gradually evolved. Today, accessible tourism encompasses a diverse community of people who face any barrier to travel. These terms reflect the broader objective of making the tourism experience accessible to all, regardless of their limitations and promoting the inclusion of all tourism stakeholders.

3.3. Research focus and collaborations

Throughout my research, I have primarily focused on accessible tourism in the context of hospitality and ethics. In particular, the text focuses on accessibility issues and the challenges faced by people with disabilities. All tourism stakeholders must work together to create an accessible destination for tourists and locals. It is important to realise that the population is ageing, and the need for accessibility will increase. Small things like a ramp next to the stairs can help many people, from wheelchair users to the elderly and families with children in prams. Making a destination more accessible to tourists also makes life easier for locals. It is important to understand that accessibility plays a big part in the decision to travel to a destination as people with disabilities prepare for their trip months in advance. If they see that a destination is inaccessible and there is no accessibility information available, they will not choose to go.

4. Hospitality and hospitableness

In the 1990s, hospitality became a term for all hotels, bars, restaurants and other similar services. The term's literal meaning would be that guests are welcome and well-received, but they will only be welcome if they pay the price (Lashley, 2015). Hospitality occurs in host-guest encounters and is crucial in various human interactions. Anthropology sees it as important for negotiating human relationships, mythology as the worship of gods, and religion as fundamental to spiritual life. In discourses on technology, education and healthcare, hospitality is used to analyse human interactions, from websites to relationships between teachers and students and nurses/doctors and patients. Space plays a key role in understanding hospitality in tourism. Space is not only a geographical location but also a socio-cultural context where hosts and guests meet, form identities and create an environment for the experience of hospitality (Munasinghe et al., 2022). The host knows his place or city well and can help the guest when he arrives in a place unfamiliar to him and feels strange.

An essential first endeavour in promoting hospitality within an organisation is to gain insight into customers' perceptions of hospitality during service interactions. While hospitality has been extensively explored in academic discourse, particularly in business and management, a notable gap exists in empirical research into customers' interpretations of hospitality. This gap may be due to the pressing need for readily applicable insights into hospitality. Furthermore, the customer experience literature emphasises that the quality of a service encounter goes beyond the interaction with service personnel alone and includes the environmental context in which the interaction unfolds (Pijls et al., 2017).

Hospitality can be described as the selfless desire to make guests feel special and happy. The host puts the guests before himself and helps them without asking for anything in return (Lashley, 2015). We could refer to the Greek poet Homer, who said, "The guest never forgets the host who has been kind to him." The added value of hospitality is the human component that makes it special.

4.1. Layers of hospitality

Understanding the layers of hospitality is essential, especially in the service industry. The graph below, taken from Tasci and Semrad (2016), shows a diagram of the layers of hospitality and how they evolve (figure 1).
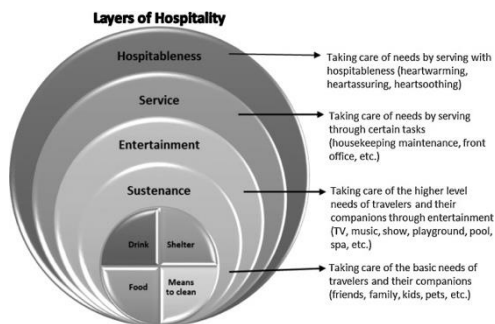
Figure 1. Layers of Hospitality (Tasci & Semrad, 2016)

Hospitality is roughly made up of 4 layers. In the first basic layer, basic services provide for basic needs. These include food, drink, cleanliness and accommodation. Even the ancient Greeks provided shelter and food for travellers, and some even washed their clothes. Then, there is the layer of entertainment and amusement. This layer has added value, such as a swimming pool, television, common lounges, games rooms, etc. It represents a greater connection between guests and a place where they can socialise and get to know each other.

The next layer is service and catering, which includes reception, housekeeping, staff service, and other activities. The human factor is very important in this layer. With the development of technology, there is already a problem with the automation and robotisation of services to replace people.

This can be a problem in terms of hospitality, as there is less interaction and personal contact with employees. As more and more operations become automated and guests become used to this over time, there will be a significant lack of socialisation and communication.

The final layer is hospitableness, without which there is no hospitality. All layers can be partially deficient or eliminated if hospitableness is present. Hospitality is the bond between guest and host that can improve or destroy the guest's overall experience (Tasci & Semrad, 2016).

Knowing the difference between commercial and non-commercial hospitality is also key. Using the above graph as an example, we can say that food, drink and accommodation are commercial hospitality, as they are expected to be paid for. On the other hand, whoever serves this food and drink, whoever welcomes the guest into the hotel, may practise full non-commercial hospitality, as they expect nothing in return. Non-commercial and commercial hospitality are very much intertwined, and the main factor that can tip the balance one way or the other is the human being.

4.2. Causal loop diagram (CLD) in the frame of System Dynamics (SD)

The power of modelling lies in its ability to describe experiences within a concrete procedure (mental model) using one of the existing languages in the framework of a concrete theory. This practical application of our system dynamics model allows us to understand and potentially influence the complex interplay of values, quality of life, and people with disabilities in real-world scenarios. As Miller (Miller, 1978) suggested, our planet and all its living beings are seen as interdependent systems that influence each other while the environment influences them. Following the systems approach, organisations and society can be called soft systems because they are composed of people, their feelings, values,

thoughts, knowledge, consciousness, and orientation, which influence the balance of everything, regardless of the diversity of people, guests, and tourists. Based on one of the principles of systems, i.e. homeostasis, we built a CLD model in the frame of system dynamics. System dynamics modelling discovers and represents the feedback processes (Sterman, 2023) and the interdependence of values, the state of eudaimonia (a state of flourishing or well-being) and people with disabilities. This concept of eudaimonia, as described by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, is particularly relevant to our study as it provides a framework for understanding the well-being of individuals with disabilities, which was the content of the interview questionnaire.
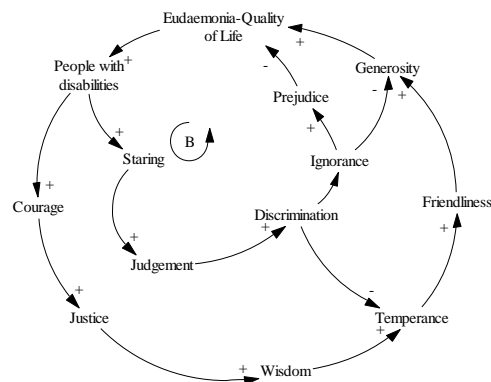
Figure 2. Causal loop model of interdependencies of Quality of life-eudaemonia and Aristotelian virtues

The figure 2 illustrates the dynamic relationships that influence the attainment of eudaemonia, representing the quality of life and the corresponding positive (+) and negative effects (+) on people facing barriers. The units connected by '+' signs indicate reinforcement cycles. However, since perpetual growth is unsustainable, we must recognise the limitations of growth. These limits are imposed by negative (-) feedback (Jere Jakulin, 2017). Eudaemonia is the central construct, influenced by

various factors indicated by positive and negative arrows. The positive influences (+) are all from Aristotle's virtues, and the negative (-) ones greatly impact behaviour towards people with barriers. Attitudes consist of negative influences (-) such as staring, judgement, discrimination and ignorance. These represent negative (-) attitudes towards people with barriers and consequently hurt eudaimonia. All values key to achieving eudaimonia strongly influence mental patterns and attitudes. The values which positively influence each other are Eudaimonia (well-being, quality of life), which positively influences (+) people with disabilities. People with disabilities increase their courage (+), which positively influences the sense of justice (+); justice (harmonious mind) positively influences (+) wisdom, the wisdom increases (+) temperance, temperance increases (+) friendliness (+), friendliness increases (+) generosity and generosity increases (+) eudaemonia or quality of life. This is a so-called reinforcing circle, where all the elements increase and positively influence each other. To achieve a balance, we must identify negative loops and a circle of balance where (-) keeps growth balanced. The circle of balance represents staring, which increases (+) judgement; judgement increases (+) discrimination; discrimination increases (+) ignorance, and ignorance increases (+) prejudice, and prejudice negatively influences or decreases (-) eudaemonia or well-being (quality of life), It is up to us to monitor the growth of quality and to determine how much the assumptions for the quality of life on the planet are growing (Arsovski, 2023).

We can present system prevention with the system modelling method and its explanation. If we only follow growth and (+), our system will blow out without achieving a state of homeostasis. CLD models simplify the presentation of essential factors and the cause-and-effect relationships between them (Binder et al., 2004).

It is important to note that these virtues were recognised by Aristotle long ago and are still valid today. Even the negative effects (-) are still the same, and they are one of the biggest problems today, especially regarding interaction between people. This visualisation highlights the complex interplay between individual virtues and societal attitudes. It highlights ways to promote inclusive environments and improve the quality of life of all people, including those with barriers.

5. Hospitality in the context of accessible tourism

Is hospitality an accessible tourism commercial, or is it non-commercial? As far back as ancient Greece, the term "Xenia", meaning the hospitality shown by the ancient Greeks to those who came from far away from their home, is well established (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014). So, it is completely non-commercial hospitality, as the ancient Greeks did not expect anything in return; they just wanted their guests to feel comfortable and at home.

Hospitality means helping someone selflessly or committing to satisfy the physiological and emotional needs of guests without expecting anything in return. In contrast, bars, hotels and restaurants imply commercial relationships where services are sold at a price and a profit is expected (Lashley, 2008). This is true in theory, as there are still employees within hotels and restaurants who can go the extra mile and show genuine non-commercial hospitality to guests and expect nothing in return. It all depends on the people themselves. On this basis, we can conclude that each individual has a distinct dominant instinct, either an active positive instinct to offer hospitality or a passive negative instinct to accept hospitality (Munasinghe et al., 2022). Given the importance of these instincts, it is reasonable to argue that humanity can be divided into two broad classes: those who are hosts by nature and those who are more

comfortable as guests.

Going back to whether hospitality in accessible tourism is commercial or non-commercial, we could say that, in most cases, it is non-commercial hospitality. If a municipality, a hotel or any other establishment builds a ramp for wheelchair users or a hearing loop, they do not expect anything in return; they want to facilitate access for people who need it. The same is true in hotels when staff help people with barriers or when a bus driver helps a person to board a bus. These are all examples of non-commercial hospitality. People with any disability want to have the same opportunities as others without having to ask or beg for them.

5.1. Discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities

Discrimination against people with disabilities has many causes, but prejudice is the most common. Prejudice is a sweeping generalisation of stereotypes that assumes that all group members have the same specific characteristics, i.e., that group members are the same. When a norm is set by society that beautiful bodies, healthy looks, productive strength and strong power are normal, people with disabilities become mere bystanders. At that point, stigmatisation occurs. The whole environment develops about people who do not have barriers. As a result, people with barriers are in the minority and are disadvantaged because architecture, working conditions, transport, etc., do not develop in line with accessibility. In particular, it is a problem that people with various barriers are perceived as needing some assistance rather than as equal members of society or the population (Lim, 2020).

5.2. Examples of good practice

Barcelona is one of the most affordable destinations in the world. They have accessible public transport, they have accessible museums, and they go to great lengths to make their hotels as accessible as possible. Also, they have accessible streets in the city, the car parks are adapted for disabled people, the toilets are accessible, and the beaches are also accessible for disabled people. In Barcelona, they have developed an app called "Mapp4all", which presents all points of interest, including information on their accessibility and target group.

The app provides information on the accessibility of places around the destination, including restaurants, bars and attractions, while also providing information on whether certain points are equipped for all users, regardless of any restrictions. In a digital age where mobile use is an indispensable part of travel, the "Mapp4all" app brings an innovative solution to improve the experience of people with barriers while promoting awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups of people in the tourism environment. The app mentioned above is a very nice example of non-commercial hospitality, as its creators have made it easier for people with disabilities to access information without having to pay for it, as the app is free of charge.

As an example of good practice, Ljubljana should also be highlighted. Visit Ljubljana, which the Ljubljana Tourist Information Centre manages, has a special "accessible tourism" tab where visitors can get all the information they need. The Ljubljana Tourist Information Centre has also installed a hearing loop to help people who are hard of hearing. Ljubljana also has public bus transport, where all buses have ramps that wheelchair users can use. Another new feature is that in the "Urbana" app, which is an app for bus transport, any user can request assistance from the bus driver when boarding the bus. In this way, Ljubljana's passenger transport has become even more accessible and, in terms of hospitality, has taken a step forward in non-commercial hospitality.

5.3. Issues in accessible tourism

After conversing with an employee from the institute dedicated to accessibility and aiding individuals with barriers, we discovered that one of the foremost challenges arises from the inability of many museums to modify their buildings, often constrained by monument protection regulations. The problem arises regarding interfering with monument protection because certain laws prohibit too much interference. Many museums and other cultural sites would like to be able to adapt their buildings, but monument protection prevents them from doing so. After our discussion, we discovered that Ljubljana is the most accessible destination in Slovenia because they are trying to make it easy for everyone to come and explore Ljubljana. The problem arises with other places in Slovenia because they do not put enough emphasis on accessibility or they do not think about it at all.

After talking to them, we also realised that pictograms are a big problem because they do not describe enough. The most well-known pictogram is a person in a wheelchair, and this is used to mark facilities as accessible. It would make sense to describe what is accessible and what is not besides the pictogram. The current labelling does not make it clear exactly whether the whole facility is accessible or only part of it is accessible. Accessibility needs to be looked at more broadly, including whether there are accessible rooms, whether the restaurant is accessible, whether everyone can access it, and above all, which disabilities the facility is accessible for. The institute found out that the most accessible facilities are for wheelchair users, while the least accessible facilities are for the deaf and hard of hearing and the blind and visually impaired.

In Ljubljana, we realised that it is very well laid out with tactile signs that help the visually impaired in their daily lives. Again, we can point out that the hospitality was non-commercial, as the municipality does not expect anything in return; they want to make everyday life easier for people with disabilities. There is an urgent need for intercity transport in Slovenia, as currently, wheelchair users can only travel by train, which is inaccessible throughout Slovenia. Unfortunately, intercity buses are not accessible for wheelchair users.

More broadly, people with disabilities already face difficulties when planning their journey to a destination. Air travel can be a major problem, as there are some restrictions. The biggest problem is the lack of information on accessibility at the destination. Destinations generally do not highlight their accessibility, and general information on accessibility is rarely published.

Personal and social factors have a major impact on the travel of people with disabilities. In various studies, authors have pointed out that the predominant negative influence is the fear of being noticed and colliding with others (Park et al., 2023). Poor attitudes of bus drivers, hotel staff, and others are also frequently mentioned as indicative of the host's negative interpersonal attitude towards the guest. Safety and independence are key factors needed by people with disabilities. An important factor that makes people with disabilities uncomfortable or feel less worthy is being stared at. They point out that other participants constantly look at them because they are different, making them uncomfortable. As author Garland-Thomson (2009) states, so-called staring is a problem when someone notices someone staring at them. She points out that we can stare at someone or have someone stare at us. Her aim is not to minimise the significant discomfort and fear that many individuals with barriers may experience when being stared at but to promote attention to the different social roles that all individuals occupy.

5.4. Inclusive hospitality

Personal and social factors have a major impact on the travel of people with disabilities. In various studies, authors have pointed out that the predominant negative influence is the fear of being noticed and colliding with others (Park et al., 2023). Poor attitudes of bus drivers, hotel staff, and others are also frequently mentioned as indicative of the host's negative interpersonal attitude towards the guest. Safety and independence are key factors needed by people with disabilities. An important factor that makes people with disabilities uncomfortable or feel less worthy is being stared at. They point out that other participants constantly look at them because they are different, making them uncomfortable. As author Garland-Thomson (2009) states, so-called staring is a problem when someone notices someone staring at them. She points out that we can stare at someone or have someone stare at us. Her aim is not to minimise the significant discomfort and fear that many individuals with barriers may experience when being stared at but to promote attention to all individuals' different social roles.

It is important to create a friendly and welcoming environment for the guests and not discriminate between guests, as all guests are equally important. Above all, hospitality is based on compassion and acceptance (Lashley, 2008). Hospitality can also be described as a selfless desire to meet the needs of others. In the case of accessibility, this can be related to assistance with everyday tasks, help with transport, hearing loops at hotel receptions, ramps to facilitate wheelchair access and adapted hotel rooms for people with disabilities.

5.5. Role of key stakeholders in promoting accessibility

It is important to educate all stakeholders, from the architects who draw up the plans for new buildings to the employees, about the needs of people with disabilities. Understanding the process and people's difficulties would lead to greater hospitability and empathy towards others.

The main stakeholders influencing hospitality in accessible tourism can be divided into three key actors. Firstly, hosts are among the most important. Hosts are hotels, restaurants, tourist destinations, and others involved in the destination. It is important that hosts are aware of the needs of people with disabilities and that their facilities are adapted. Given the sustainability orientation of destinations, one of the sustainability objectives is accessibility, which is neglected from a sustainability perspective. It would make sense for hotels and others to look at examples of good practices, consult other stakeholders, or seek advice from relevant institutions.

Staff are also very important players in hospitality and inclusion. Employees in the tourism industry and other services contribute to non-commercial hospitality. Staff needs to be properly informed about the different types of barriers and have adequate training on accessibility. Understanding the specific needs of guests with mobility, sensory or cognitive barriers is key to providing appropriate services. Staff play a very important role in creating an inclusive and accepting environment. Within this environment, equal treatment is provided to all guests, regardless of their limitations or needs. Staff must respect diversity and be aware of the need to make adjustments. Also, staff are key in providing information on accessibility in the place and destination.

Moreover, as a third important actor, communities and organisations should be highlighted. The local community is key in raising awareness and involving all citizens. They are responsible for creating a physical environment that is accessible and welcoming to all. State institutions and government bodies are also key to the

process, especially in legislation and policy. State institutions should provide financial support for projects and initiatives that improve accessibility and hospitality for people with disabilities. Likewise, staff training in accessibility should be provided, as this is the only way to ensure the effective implementation of policies and services.

5.6. Accessibility for all: challenges and opportunities

Accessibility can be divided into three sub-groups: physical accessibility, communication accessibility, and social accessibility. Regarding physical accessibility, infrastructure is adapting to people with disabilities but is still insufficient or slow. The same applies to communication accessibility, which is difficult, especially for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, as very few facilities are adapted or properly equipped. Here, education and cooperation are very important, especially on the part of the competent authorities, which should provide guidelines for developing accessibility. Also, national tourism organisations should promote accessible tourism and have all information on accessibility available on a general website. Challenges have already been highlighted in previous chapters, particularly the major challenge of monument protection, which does not allow museums to intervene too much in the structure of the building. Nevertheless, institutions could at least provide movable hearing loops, ramps, and aids for the visually impaired, but this represents an additional cost, as the state should set up a specific fund or funds for accessibility development. In the same way that companies can obtain funding for sustainability and green tourism, funding for accessibility should be available.

6. Conclusion

After reviewing the literature and analysing the field, it can be concluded that the lack of knowledge, information and accessible infrastructure is a major problem. Accessibility in tourism is key to ensuring equal opportunities and improving the tourism experience for all. This study has identified important milestones and challenges in this area, highlighting the need for further efforts to improve the tourism industry's infrastructure, awareness and approaches. It is also important to emphasise that hospitality has an important role to play, not only in complementing accessibility but also in ensuring that all people feel welcome and safe, regardless of potential barriers. A friendly and inclusive attitude and personalised services are key elements that enrich the tourist experience.

There are currently almost one billion people in the world with various types of disabilities. 10% of the world's population is over 65 years old, and the trend suggests that this percentage will rise to 16% by 2050 (World Bank, 2024). After all the quantitative data, it is essential to think about the current development of accessibility to make destinations accessible in the future. The first president of ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism), Lillian Müller, stated in 2010 that accessible tourism is not niche tourism but a demographic explosion that we will all feel. Accessibility must be regulated now because we are working for our future (Münch & Ulrich, 2011).

Because of these factors, listening to people with different barriers and involving them in strategic decision-making is necessary. When building new hotels, renovating museums, and so on, a larger team of advisors, which should include community members with different types of disabilities, is always necessary.

People need to embrace the virtues and live their lives with them. We all need to treat everyone the same all the time, not just when we feel good or when we feel like it. As Aristotle said in the Nicomachean Ethics,

"One swallow does not make a summer, neither does one fine day; similarly, one day or brief time of happiness does not make a person entirely happy."

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