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Cultural Tourism: A review of recent research and trends

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Abstract

This review article traces the development of cultural tourism as a field of research over the past decade, identifying major trends and research areas. Cultural tourism has recently been re-affirmed by the UNWTO as a major element of international tourism consumption, accounting for over 39% of tourism arrivals. Cultural tourism research has also grown rapidly, particularly in fields such as cultural consumption, cultural motivations, heritage conservation, cultural tourism economics, anthropology and the relationship with the creative economy. Major research trends include the shift from tangible to intangible heritage, more attention for indigenous and other minority groups and a geographical expansion in the coverage of cultural tourism research. The field also reflects a number of 'turns' in social science, including the mobilities turn, the performance turn and the creative turn. The paper concludes with a number of suggestions for future research directions, such as the development of trans-modern cultures and the impacts of new technologies.

Keywords

Cultural tourism, tangible heritage, intangible heritage, indigenous tourism, cultural consumption

1 Introduction

Culture and tourism have always been inextricably linked. Cultural sights, attractions and events provide an important motivation for travel, and travel in itself generates culture. But it is only in recent decades that the link between culture and tourism has been more explicitly identified as a specific form of consumption: cultural tourism.

The emergence of cultural tourism as a social phenomenon and as an object of academic study can be traced back to the surge in post-World War 2 leisure travel. In Europe, travel helped to increase cultural understanding as well as rebuild shattered economies. As incomes and consumption continued to rise in the 1960s and 1970s, so did international travel, and the consumption of culture. By the 1980s the flow of international tourists to major sites and attractions began to attract enough attention for the label 'cultural tourism' to be attached to an emerging niche market. Early academic studies of cultural tourism also surfaced at this time, and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO, as it was then) produced its first definition of the phenomenon. In the early 1990s the first estimate of the size of this 'new' market also emerged (at 37% of all international tourism) and were attributed to the WTO, even though Bywater (1993) comments that it was not clear how this estimate was derived.

Interest in cultural tourism continued to grow throughout the 1980s and 1990s, driven by the 'heritage boom' (Hewison, 1987), the growth of international and domestic travel and the identification of cultural tourism as a 'good' form of tourism that would stimulate the economy and help conserve culture (Richards, 2001). The beginning of the 1990s indicates a period of transformation of cultural tourism which, unlike the original orientation towards elite clientele, found a new opportunity for development in the orientation towards the mass market. Cultural tourism became a well-established phenomenon in many tourism destinations, and was increasingly the target of academic research. The first textbooks on cultural tourism began to emerge (Smith, 2003; Ivanovic, 2008) and a growing range of research papers appeared, linked to many different theoretical and methodological approaches (Richards and Munsters, 2010, Smith and Richards, 2013).

Growth in cultural tourism was also marked by fragmentation into a number of emerging niches, such as heritage tourism, arts tourism, gastronomic tourism., film tourism and creative tourism. Just as an expanding notion of culture had helped to stimulate the growth of cultural tourism in the 1990s, so the fragmentation of the cultural tourism concept itself helped to produce a surge in the proportion of publications dedicated to the field. Growth also brought its own challenges, and by 2013 Boniface was already signalling problems with the overcrowding of World Heritage Sites, a phenomenon that is now being linked with the idea of 'overtourism'. The problems being encountered with the conservation of tangible heritage and the growing desire of tourists for new experiences also helped to focus attention on the role of intangible heritage in tourism (du Cros, 2012).

The changing nature of cultural tourism was recently brought into focus by a UNWTO *Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies* (2018), which included online surveys covering 43% of UNWTO Member States as well as 61 international experts and academics in the field. This study confirmed the importance of the cultural tourism, with 89% of national tourism administrations indicating that cultural tourism was part of their tourism policy. The respondents also indicated that they expected further growth in cultural tourism in the following five years. The research also for the first time provided empirical support for the original estimates of the size of the cultural tourism market. This was estimated to account for

over 39% of all international tourism arrivals, or the equivalent of around 516 million international trips in 2017. This provides an apparent vindication of the long quoted, but largely unsubstantiated estimate that cultural tourism accounts for 40% of global tourism (Bywater, 1993). The crucial point, however, is how cultural tourism is defined – a debate that has raged for a long time (Richards, 1996; du Cros and McKercher, 2014; Allen, Rhoden, Sakharchuk, Ilkevich, Sharafanova, & Pecheritsa, 2015).

Cultural tourism was also one of the types of tourism that received a new operational definition from the UNWTO at the 22nd Session of the General Assembly held in Chengdu, China (UNWTO, 2017: 18):

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination.

These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.

This new definition confirms the much broader nature of contemporary cultural tourism, which relates not just to sites and monuments, but to ways of life, creativity and 'everyday culture'. As the UNWTO (2018) report emphasises, the field of cultural tourism has moved away from the previous emphasis on classic western tangible heritage towards a much broader and inclusive field of diverse cultural practices in all corners of the world. In this sense the new definition mirrors the development of the production and consumption of cultural tourism, as well as the development of academic research on cultural tourism. It is impossible in such a brief review to do justice to the increasing breadth and diversity of cultural tourism research, but it is hoped that at least some of the main themes can be traced.

2 Major themes in the Literature

The growing body of cultural tourism scholarship is confirmed by a literature search on the term "cultural tourism" on Google Scholar. As Figure 1 indicates, cultural tourism sources have risen from less than 100 in 1990 to over 6000 in 2016. Growth was particularly sharp between 2005 and 2015, and cultural tourism publications have risen as a proportion of all tourism publications, to reach nearly 5% by 2017. This growth has also been supported by a number of flourishing sub-themes in the field. These also tend to relate to some major academic disciplines, such as sociology, economics, anthropology and psychology. The current review covers first some of the major research areas related to these fields, before summarising some of the major emerging research trends. Because of the vast scope of the literature most attention has been paid to research articles published since 2010. Other sources can provide overviews of the literature up to this date (e.g. Smith and Richards, 2013; du Cros and McKercher, 2014). A search of the literature reveals, however, that the current review is the first to cover the cultural tourism field as a whole. Some of the major research themes that emerge from our review of publications listed in Google Scholar and Scopus include cultural tourism as a form of cultural consumption, motivations for cultural tourism, the economic aspects of cultural tourism, the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage, the growth of the creative economy, and the links between anthropology and cultural tourism.

Insert Figure 1: Cultural tourism publications 1990-2016 (source: Google scholar)

2.1 Cultural consumption

Cultural tourism as a form of cultural consumption has been a particularly important topic for sociological studies in the field. Much of this research has sought to understand the cultural tourism audience and in particular the variation and stratification within it. Early discussions of cultural tourism also developed a division between 'general' and 'specific' cultural tourists, with the former consuming culture as part of a general holiday experience, and the latter travelling purposefully to engage in some aspect of the culture of the destination (Richards 1996). This simple dichotomy was later extended to cover different typologies of cultural tourists, based on features such as the depth and purposefulness of cultural motivation (Du Cros and McKercher, 2014), visits to attractions and events (Pulido-Fernández and Sánchez-Rivero, 2010), or the degree of mixing or 'omnivorousness' in cultural tourism behaviour (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2010). Most such studies were designed to identify specific groups or segments within the cultural tourism audience who might be attracted to particular types of cultural experiences. Stylianou-Lambert (2011) undertook a qualitative study of the different 'gazes' in cultural tourism, showing that tourists visiting art museums perceive them in different ways, using different types of 'perceptual filters' that influence their gaze. This indicates the fairly complex nature of cultural tourism participation, which arguably requires multi-disciplinary and multidimensional approaches to capture such complexity. Richards and van der Ark (2013), for example, used multiple correspondence analysis to identify dimensions of cultural consumption in cultural tourism. This indicated that holiday type and attraction setting had a strong influence on the type of culture consumed, which suggests an important effect of the physical context on cultural tourism behaviour. This is also in line with recent research in the field of visitor attractions (Falk, 2011), which argues that visitor experience is produced through a combination of visitor-related and context-related factors. Richards and van der Ark (2013) also suggested that cultural tourists may develop a cultural 'travel career', as younger visitors tend to consume more contemporary art, creativity and modern architecture, whereas older visitors are more prevalent at more traditional monuments and museums.

2.2 Motivation

Many studies seek to understand why people engage in cultural tourism through studies of motivation and related factors such as satisfaction and loyalty. Many of these studies are undertaken from a marketing perspective, but there are also close links with psychology and consumer behaviour.

Motivation was an important issue in early studies of cultural tourism, which was defined in terms of cultural motivation, most clearly related to learning (Richards, 1996). The original division made between general and specific cultural motivations are still evident in recent motivational studies. For example Galí-Espelt (2012) identifies two broad groups of cultural tourist: tourists whose main motivation is to consume culture and those for whom culture is a secondary motivation. She proposed categorising motivations in terms of the degree of 'culturedness': a combination of length of visit and a high to low cultural experience dimension. This mirrors to some extent the categorisation of motivations suggested by du Cros and McKercher (2014) on the basis of the 'depth' of desired cultural experience.

These divisions reflect the difference between formal and more informal modes of learning. Falk, Ballantyne, Packer and Benckendorff (2012) highlight the importance of learning in cultural tourism experiences. Extending on these findings, Ballantyne and Packer (2011) argued that the tourism industry has the responsibility to engage visitors in powerful and transformative learning experiences, both during and after their visit. They suggested that the long-term impact of a tourism experience can be significantly increased by using technology and social networking to maintain contact with visitors after they leave the site.

A cluster analysis conducted by Özel and Kozak (2012) identified five distinct cultural tourism motivation groups, labelled: “Relaxation Seekers,” “Sports Seekers,” “Family Oriented,” “Escapists,” and “Achievement and Autonomy Seekers.” The division between those seeking culture and those using it as a form of escape is also evident in the work of Correia, Kozak and Ferradeira (2013). They identified push and pull satisfaction factors in visits to Lisbon, including the intrinsic desire to learn about particular aspects of culture (such as Fado music) and a search for novelty.

Motivations of cultural tourists are often linked to factors such as satisfaction and intention to return. Chang, Backman and Chih Huang (2013) studied creative tourism sites in Taiwan, and found that on-site tourism experience was the most influential antecedent of revisit intention. Also in Taiwan, Lee and Hsu (2013) found that the motivation for visits to Aboriginal festivals significantly affected satisfaction, and that that satisfaction is also the most important predictor of loyalty (measured through intention to return).

Motivation is also increasingly linked with questions of identity. Bond and Falk (2013) presented a theoretical model of identity-related tourism motivation, combining aspects of both structure and agency theory. They point out that how tourists see themselves is important in motivating cultural visits. As the relationship between the host and the tourist culture is often crucial in cultural tourism cultural tourism motivations are also related to the extent that people self-identify as ‘cultural tourists’ (which is often surprisingly little - Richards, 2007).

2.3 *Economic aspects of cultural tourism*

Cultural tourism has long had an important economic dimension, particularly because the income derived from tourism is argued to help support the preservation of cultural heritage. In many cases, however, debates have emerged about the extent to which income streams derived from tourism have reached the cultural amenities that help to attract tourists (Richards, 2001, Russo, 2002). Many discussions of cultural tourism, particularly in emerging economies, also revolve around the need to spread tourism geographically (e.g. Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013).

Growing interest in the relationship between cultural tourism and economics is marked by a recent special issue of the *Journal of Cultural Economics* (2017). This includes a number of papers reflecting on issues such as the spending habits of cultural tourists in Amsterdam (Rouwendaal & van Loon, 2017) and the impact of cultural participation in destinations in attracting cultural tourists (Guccio, Lisi, Martorana & Mignosa, 2017). In their introduction to the special issue on “The Economics of Cultural Tourism” Noonan and Rizzo (2017) admit that little theoretical advancement has been made. The editors identify new areas of application, such as drug tourism, language tourism, and film festivals, as well as the potential for work in new areas—such as online ‘crowdsourcing’ and cultural conventions.

At its heart, the distinction between cultural tourism and tourism generally may be a false distinction.... Moving in the direction of developing more distinctly cultural economic theories of tourism presents an important challenge to the field (p. 104).

The availability of time-series data is now making it possible to start estimating the economic effects of cultural tourism more accurately in some destinations. Spain is a leading example, as the surveys carried out consistently with domestic and international tourists now provide a wealth of data to be mined. Artal-Tur, Briones-Peñalver and Villena-Navarro (2018) show the leading role that cultural activities play in attracting long-haul and first time visitors to Spain. These cultural tourists also tend to spend more than other international tourists, and play a major role in supporting Spanish Museums (Ponferrada, 2015). Cisneros-Martínez and Fernández-Morales (2015) also demonstrate the role of cultural tourism in reducing seasonality in Andalucía. In Italy, Guccio, Lisi, Mignosa and Rizzo (2018) assess the impact of the monetary value of cultural heritage on tourism. They find that a million euros worth of cultural heritage generates about 1000 more cultural visitors, which underlines the strong relationship between the regional performance of the tourism sector and cultural visitors.

Di Lascio, Giannerini, Scorcu and Candela (2011) also looked at the attractiveness of art exhibitions for tourists in Italy. They found a positive 1-year lagged effect of modern art exhibitions on tourism and a positive mild effect of contemporary art exhibitions on tourist flows. They conclude that “temporary art exhibitions contribute to increase tourist flows if they are part of a structural characteristic of a destination” (p. 239).

2.4 *Cultural heritage*

Heritage, particularly built and tangible heritage has long been one of the fundamentals of cultural tourism. As Timothy (2011) suggests, the definition of heritage is almost as fraught as the discussion about cultural tourism. He sees heritage as a broad range of resources including built patrimony, living lifestyles, ancient artefacts and modern art and culture – in other words there is little distinction between cultural tourism and heritage tourism. However, much of the research on cultural heritage has tended to concentrate on specific aspects of heritage, such as the designation of ‘World Heritage Sites’ (WHS), or debates surrounding ‘contested heritage’ consumed by tourists and others (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015).

Frey and Steiner (2011) for example, ask whether the World Heritage List makes sense? They argue that a World Heritage designation is beneficial only where “heritage sites are undetected, disregarded by national decision-makers, not commercially exploitable, and where national financial resources, political control, and technical knowledge for conservation are inadequate” (p. 555). The sense-making of designations also extends to the question whether a WHS designation actually generates more tourism. Addressing this question in terms of Italian domestic tourism, Patuelli, Mussoni and Candela (2013) conclude that a designation does appear to influence domestic arrivals to tourism destinations in Italy, but that spatial competition may reduce the positive effect by increasing competition among destinations.

Alberts and Hazen (2010) argue that to be considered for listing as a World Heritage site, properties must meet the conditions of “integrity” and/or “authenticity” and be of “outstanding universal value”. However, as they note, these concepts are difficult to define and are open to varying interpretations in different cultural settings. Jimura (2011) examines impacts on local communities around the World Heritage Site in Ogimachi, Japan. This study identified both positive and negative changes after WHS listing, including extensive and rapid

tourism development after WHS inscription; the high level of appeal of a WHS status for domestic tourists; and improvements in local people's attitudes towards conservation of the cultural environment and WHS status.

Shin (2010) also looks at cultural heritage issues in Gwangju, Korea. It was found that the majority of residents around the site were aware of the importance of cultural tourism and that they argued that it could contribute to urban development. Some older residents were unhappy with rapid growth caused by cultural tourism, whereas others saw positive effects from the improved image of the city and strengthened community pride and ethnic identity. Vong and Ung (2012) found that tourists experiencing heritage places in Macau were able to learn about Macau's history and culture through on-site heritage interpretation. They emphasise the importance of packaging heritage tourism products from a service-oriented, customer perspective.

Much recent research has traced the widening concept of cultural heritage from tangible to intangible heritage. Zhu (2012) analyses the marriage ceremony in the Naxi Wedding Courtyard in Lijiang, China. This ritual arguably gives rise to a performative experience of authenticity and offers a deep understanding of the link between memory, habitus and embodied practice. Zhu puts forward the notion of "performative authenticity" to illustrate this transitional and transformative process of authentication. The production of such performative authenticity also involves an increasing amount of emotional labour from those involved with heritage resources (Van Dijk & Kirk, 2007).

With the increasing inclusion of tangible and intangible heritage into the tourism system, more concerns are emerging about the sustainability of heritage. Loulanski and Loulanski (2011) undertook a meta-analysis of the literature and identified 15 factors deemed critical for the sustainable integration of heritage and tourism, including local involvement, education and training, authenticity and interpretation, sustainability-centered tourism management, and integrated planning.

2.5 *Creative economy*

The 'creative economy' is just one of a range of terms that have been applied to the increasing role of creative processes and knowledge generation in the economy as a whole (Richards, 2018). The expansion of cultural tourism in the direction of intangible heritage and contemporary culture has created more attention for the increasing integration between tourism and the creative economy. As the OECD (2014) report on this relationship emphasised, creative economy approaches to tourism offer the potential to add value through developing engaging creative content and experiences, supporting innovation and helping to make places more distinctive and attractive.

The creative industries were defined in this report as:

knowledge-based creative activities that link producers, consumers and places by utilising technology, talent or skill to generate meaningful intangible cultural products, creative content and experiences. They comprise many different sectors, including advertising, animation, architecture, design, film, gaming, gastronomy, music, performing arts, software and interactive games, and television and radio (p. 7).

There is a growing raft of studies of the relationship between tourism and the creative economy, covering the development of creative economy policies, specific creative sectors and activities, the role of knowledge and networks in tourism and the growth of specific 'creative tourism' experiences (Gretzel & Jamal, 2009; Richards, 2011; Fernandes, 2011; Stolarick, Denstedt, Donald & Spencer, 2011; Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2016; Fahmi, McCann & Koster, 2017). The convergence of tourism and the creative economy has in many areas occurred naturally through the growth of the creative industries, creative clusters and the creative class (Gretzel & Jamal, 2009). But as Fahmi et al. (2017) note in the case of Indonesia, the creative economy has also been "forcibly connected to other development agendas", such as tourism and cultural preservation, poverty alleviation and city branding.

The Bilbao Guggenheim and other iconic buildings by 'starchitects' have also become a major part of global urban competition strategy (Ponzini, Fotev & Mavaracchio, 2016). Tourists can also stay in 'design hotels' (Strannegård & Strannegård, 2012) or visit the World Design Capital (Booyens, 2012). Destinations try to attract the mobile 'creative class' as a new breed of cultural tourist particularly interested in the creative atmosphere and 'buzz' of places. Such locations are increasingly identified and packaged as 'creative clusters' of which there are growing numbers around the world (Marques & Richards, 2014). Many of these formally designated clusters are now major tourist destinations in different countries (Richards, 2014; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015), and there are also growing numbers of visitors to informal creative areas in cities such as London (Pappalepore, Maitland, & Smith, 2014).

The media also has an important influence on cultural tourism flows, as the many case studies on the impact of films such as *The Lord of Rings* or the Chinese blockbuster *Lost in Thailand* show (Connell, 2012; UNWTO, 2018). *Lost in Thailand* arguably induced more than four million Chinese tourists to visit Thailand in 2013, underlining that film tourism can also play a role in rearticulating geopolitical imaginaries (Mostafanezhad & Promburom, 2018) as well as supporting particular place images and stereotypes.

Creative experiences such as artistic creation, dance, cookery, are now also being used to frame destination culture. Aoyama (2009) examines the growing flamenco tourism industry in Seville, which is increasingly integrating creative production (flamenco schools, local cultural groups) with consumption (performances for tourists, creative tourism flamenco courses for visitors). Destinations are also now having to deal with the challenge of embedding relatively mobile creative processes and ideas in place to attract visitors. This inevitably raises questions about the possibility and desirability of copyrighting or protecting intangible cultural heritage (Wanda George, 2010). Ownership is already a fraught issue with tangible heritage, but cultural globalisation makes embedding of intangible culture a major challenge.

In the field of gastronomy, a lot of work has been done in protecting food local products, including the development of labels and certification of origin (Ren, 2010). Such labels can not only help to protect food products, but they also serve as markers for cultural tourism visitation (Benkhard & Halmai, 2017). Cultural tourism can also be stimulated through the development of cultural routes linked to food and wine brands, including olive oil routes (Arjona-Fuentes & Amador-Hidalgo, 2017), cheese routes (Folgado-Fernández, Palos-Sánchez, Campón-Cerro & Hernández-Mogollón, 2017) and wine routes (Castro, de Oliveira Santos, Gimenes-Minasse & Giraldi, 2017).

The mobility of creative skills and knowledge has also shed light on the importance of networks as conduits of knowledge flows and a means to generate creative experiences.

Hjalager (2009) analyses the development of a complex range of public private collaborations to support the development of cultural and creativity in the small Danish city of Roskilde. Cultural tourism there is supported by a famous rock festival, but a Viking ship museum (Bærenholdt, 2017) and more recently the development of the RAGNAROCK Museum, which “depicts and conveys how young people through time have moved borders and influenced society through music and youth culture” (<http://museumragnarock.dk/en/besoeg/>).

Other elements of youth culture are also being recognised as important sources of cultural tourism. Redondo-Carretero, Camarero-Izquierdo, Gutiérrez-Arranz and Rodríguez-Pinto (2017) illustrate the importance of language tourism to the Spanish city of Valladolid. Estimates indicate that around 850,000 international tourists visited Spain in 2014 for academic reasons, most to learn Spanish. Research in Valladolid shows that the perceived value of the cultural offer is important in the choice of destination for language students. Expenditure is also significantly greater among those motivated by the cultural attractions of the city.

Báez-Montenegro and Devesa-Fernández (2017) also suggest the existence of a wider kind of festival tourism, focussed on a general interest in a creative sector, such as cinema. They argue that such ‘cinema tourism’ is currently undervalued. Film festivals and other creative events are also becoming important ‘knowledge hubs’ in global networks, with film and literary festivals attracting a growing audience of aficionados (Podestà and Richards, 2016). Countries such as Korea are also trying to latch onto cultural and creative tourism linked the creative industries in general, such as the Korean initiative to develop Korean Wave or *Hallyu* tourism (Richards, 2014) based on films, K-Pop and Korean TV dramas (Kim, Long & Robinson, 2009), but increasingly opened up to wider elements of Korean pop culture. Bae, Chang, Park and Kim (2017) demonstrate that Hallyu does have a significant positive effect on inbound tourism and therefore the wider economy.

2.6 *Emerging Identities*

Anthropology has long made important contributions to the study of cultural tourism, with seminal works such as Picard’s (1996) study of Bali and Greenwood’s (1972) analysis of cultural events in Spain. Much recent work in this area has re-focussed attention on the role of indigenous cultures in different parts of the world. Indigenous or aboriginal peoples are being increasingly linked into the tourism system by internal and external actors. Korstanje (2012) argues that indigenous tourism helps maintain neo-colonialist attitudes, and that many indigenous cultures still face ethnocentric treatment, continuing to be ‘protected’ for tourist consumption by outsiders who believe they know better than the natives themselves. Korstanje asks: “Why, for example, are virtually all visits to Hopi and Navajo Indian reservations considered ethnic tourism or cultural tourism, while most visits to Chicago, or even rural, Anglo communities in the upper Midwest USA, are not?” (p. 182). This is an increasingly pressing problem as travel companies increasingly bring tourists to indigenous communities in formerly inaccessible areas such as the Amazon rainforest (Ochoa Zuluaga, 2015), the Canadian Arctic (Lynch, Duinker, Sheehan & Chute, 2011) and the wet tropics of Australia (Pabel, Prideaux & Thompson, 2017). In the Kalahari Desert, Tomaselli (2012:5) remarks that “cultural tourism ventures often forget or neglect the very people on whom brands are constructed”. Similarly, Nielsen and Wilson (2012) argue that indigenous tourism is still based on the needs and priorities of non-Indigenous people.

This is important because the increasing use of intangible heritage puts people at the heart of cultural tourism, and questions of representation become important. As Yang (2011) shows in the case of China, hegemony is perpetuated in representations of minority culture. Through the representation of “otherness,” the state and capital can shape ethnic landscapes for political and economic interests through tourism development, so that cultural tourism is constructed not only to meet the needs of tourists, but also the demands of internal domestic politics. Yang argues that the representation of minority culture has been strongly influenced by the government and Han managers who act as selectors to construct an “exotic other” that meets political and economic needs.

As Winter (2009) argues in an Asian context, there is a need to listen to more minority voices in cultural tourism, as many are current drowned out by dominant narratives and ignored by western analyses of the tourism system. There now seem to be more alternative voices emerging in research on cultural tourism (e.g. d’Hautesserre, 2011; Diekmann & Smith, 2015), but there is doubtless room for more, particularly as more minority cultures themselves start travelling more (Peters & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012).

3 Emerging trends and future directions in cultural tourism research

This necessarily limited review of cultural tourism research over the past decade or so reflects many of the trends that are outlined in the UNWTO *Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies* (2018). The many academics who responded to the UNWTO survey not only underlined the growth of cultural tourism over the five years previous to the survey, but almost overwhelmingly concluded that cultural tourism would continue to grow in future.

In some ways this is perhaps not surprising, since the growth of cultural tourism is largely driven by increased tourism, rather than an expansion in cultural interest (Richards, 2007). Continued growth has, however, changed the position of cultural tourism from a niche market consisting of relatively well-educated and high income visitors, towards a mass market open to a much wider range of people. This creates a challenge in many destinations, where the development of ‘mass cultural tourism’ leads to overcrowding at key sites and complaints of ‘overtourism’ in some cities (García-Hernández, de la Calle-Vaquero & Yubero, 2017). The crumbling position of cultural tourism as a desirable form of tourism is also directly related to the decline in elitism in the cultural tourism audience. Cultural tourism used to be seen as a kind of socially desirable filter that would help attract ‘good’ tourists. Growing numbers have meant that it can also be seen as the thin end of the mass tourism wedge, entering to destroy the very culture that the tourists seek. The current research evidence for such hypothesised effects is mixed, however. For the art city of Florence, Popp (2012) found evidence of positive and negative effects related to crowds of cultural tourists. In the case of Bruges, Belgium, Neuts and Nijkamp (2012) also found no clear relationship between crowding and resident attitudes. In a study of ten German cities Tokarchuk, Gabriele & Maurer (2017) find that cultural tourism flows have significant well-being benefits for residents.

Many studies of urban cultural tourism are also often based on a shaky dichotomy between ‘tourist’ and ‘resident’ that fails to recognise the increasing porousness of these categories. Work related to the mobilities paradigm has underlined the considerable overlap between travellers with different motives (den Hoed & Russo, 2017), and between tourists and residents (Richards, 2017).

The cultural object of tourism has also shifted as cultural tourism has grown. The search for the exceptional has been joined by a quest for the everyday (Richards, 2011). Tourists

increasingly want to 'live like a local', whether it is to avoid being labelled as a tourist, or if it is because the 'local' has become the new touchstone of authenticity (Richards & Russo, 2016). What is the meaning of the 'local' for the 'locals' themselves, as well as the other groups who pass through the community? This is a question that tourists struggle with, as do many destinations, who create a new range of labels for visitors as 'temporary citizens' or 'global citizens' or 'global nomads' (Kannisto, 2017).

This identification of 'new cultural tourism' (Jovicic, 2016) is arguably based on a number of significant 'turns' that have been marked in social science in recent decades. These are the mobilities turn, the performative turn and the creative turn (Kjaer Mansfeldt, 2015). All three of these turns are evident in the field of cultural tourism. In particular there are increasing challenges in defining the 'cultural tourist' and the object of cultural tourism as static categories (Russo and Richards, 2016) as both the tourist and the local begin to perform different roles relative to one another. This also opens up a space that Kjaer Mansfeldt (2015) identifies as 'in-betweenness': the ways in which the untouristic begins to define tourist experience and produce new space that belong neither to the usual reality of the tourist or the local.

This complexity produces new challenges in the definition of cultural tourism. In a sense, there has been a journey from the original UNWTO definition of cultural tourism as effectively containing all tourism experience (because all tourism implies learning), through more narrow definitions designed to aid measurement and conceptual understanding of this emerging phenomenon (Richards, 2001), back to the broader definition now proposed by the UNTWO (2018), and even broader concepts that include in-betweenness and non-tourism.

This highlights the need to study cultural tourism not so much as a specific form of tourism or as a coherent tourism market, but as a collection of cultural practices engaged in by a wide range of actors in the destination and by tourists themselves. At a micro level the kind of studies of tourist performance developed by Tim Edensor (2008) at the Taj Mahal in India offer a lot of promise in uncovering the meanings of the roles and behaviours of tourists and other actors in the system. But there is also a need to link these micro-behaviours to the level of broader social groups. In the field of tourism there is room for the kind of analysis of ritual undertaken by Randall Collins (2004), which enables a linkage of the actions of individuals with the dynamics of the group and with broader social and economic drivers. Collin's argument that gatherings of people react at a bodily level to one another also provides a potentially useful link to a growing range of studies in the field of crowds. There is little doubt that people feel and behave differently in a crowded space than in an empty one, and the former is increasingly the scenario in which most cultural tourists are found. A number of studies have already attempted to track cultural tourists (e.g. Edwards, Dickson, Griffin & Hayllar, 2010), but new technologies also offer the possibility of following their mood as they move from one cultural experience to another.

It is also clear that the focus of cultural tourism research is shifting, from the previous concentration on tangible heritage in Europe and North America towards areas where the relationship between tourism and culture is being rapidly re-defined, notably in Asia. Many new studies are emerging in areas such as China, Taiwan and Korea, where societies undergoing rapid change are rediscovering their links with tangible and intangible heritage. An interesting aspect of such developments is that they often combine heritage conservation with applications of new technologies, strengthening content production and closer links between tourism and the creative economy. This is very evident in Korea, where government-sponsored

programmes have supported the development of creative tourism experiences and applications (Richards, 2018).

3.1 Future research directions

The UNWTO *Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies* (2018) points to a number of areas of future cultural tourism development which may also become fruitful areas for research. The tourism experts surveyed by the UNWTO expect cultural tourism to grow in future (93% agree). Growth is also expected to increase the diversity of cultural tourism demand and supply, increasing the importance of a number of niches, and stimulating a general shift towards intangible heritage and what one respondent called “soft cultural infrastructure”.

This also poses a number of challenges for future research, particularly in terms of the definition of “cultural tourism”. Defining cultural tourism has become a major debate in the literature, because the notions of culture and tourism themselves are so diverse and open to differing interpretations. As Richards (2003) noted, this has spawned a range of different definitional approaches that cover a field delineated by two axes: the dichotomy between meaning and measurement on the one hand, and the division between supply and demand on the other (Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2: The definitional field of cultural tourism (Source: Richards, 2003)

The problem with such definitional approaches is that they increasingly fail to account for the integration of supply and demand (for example the co-creation of cultural experiences by tourists and suppliers) and the failure of most measurements of cultural tourism to capture the meaning of the phenomenon. In the future, much more effort should be applied to studying the practices of cultural tourism, which form a system that includes the materials that provide the basis of the cultural tourism practice (e.g. tangible and intangible heritage, contemporary culture and creativity), the meanings that people attach to the practice (e.g. learning, identity, narrative and storytelling) and the competences that are developed through the practice (e.g. ways of ‘doing’ cultural tourism, reading and interpreting cultural heritage). The important point is that all elements of the practice are mutually dependent (Figure 3). You cannot become a cultural tourist without cultural materials to consume, which in turn requires a certain level of cultural capital or competence, and it must mean something to you, for example by learning something or affirming your identity. Contemporary cultural tourism exhibits a wide range of such practices, which may also converge at specific sites, destinations or times, as Edensor’s work at the Taj Mahal (1998) demonstrates. In identifying the different practices of cultural tourism, links can also be made to the growing body of work on Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (e.g. van der Duim, Ren & Thór Jóhannesson, 2013).

Insert Figure 3: The practices of cultural tourism

Taking a practice approach to cultural tourism, one entry point into the issue of definition is to explore what cultural tourism means to the tourists themselves. The ATLAS Cultural Tourism Project has consistently found a much smaller percentage of people who self-identify as cultural tourists (5-10%) than the broader measures generated by counting all those who visit cultural attractions (40%) (Richards and Munsters, 2010). This raises questions such as what is the difference between a tourist who visits a museum, and a cultural tourist who visits a

museum? Does feeling like a cultural tourist lead to different behavior and patterns of interaction with culture?

Another important pointer to the future of cultural tourism according to the UNWTO is increasing synergies between tourism and culture. Cultural tourism has long been seen as benefitting both fields, by providing support for culture and generating attractions for tourism. But there are real questions about the extent to which such synergies are being realized, and also whether culture and tourism can actively harm one another. The view of synergies at present is very narrow, and links are seen more in terms of different types of tourism, rather than between tourism and culture per se (e.g. Buultjens, Gale & White, 2010; Okumus, Avci, Kilic & Walls, 2012). Research also tends to focus on economic issues, particularly how much of the money generated through cultural tourism accrues to the cultural resources that support it. This economic focus is important, because cultural tourists have consistently been shown to spend more than most other types of tourists. However, there has been little attempt to extend the discussion to other forms of value. There is a need to develop and/or apply new measures of cultural, social, knowledge-based or creative value (e.g. Sacco and Blessi, 2007; Richards 2015).

The value focus of cultural tourism also often depends on the governance style. But there has been little research on the types of governance arrangements or 'regimes' that promote, support and develop cultural tourism, how these operate and the consequences they have. For example there are a growing number of public-private partnerships formed to develop and promote cultural tourism, such as heritage hotels in Rajasthan, many cultural routes in Europe, and Cultural Tourism Enterprises in Tanzania (UNWTO, 2018). But we know relatively little about how these bodies function, or the effect that they have on tourism flows, destination development or marketing. Many of these partnerships are also tourism-led, rather than culture-based. This raises the question of whether such arrangements lead to the privatization or commercialization of culture, particularly under neo-liberal governance regimes.

The application of new technologies to cultural tourism experiences is another area that will require more research in future. Although Virtual Reality (computer-generated 3D environments) and Augmented Reality (the projection of computer-generated images onto a real world view) are hardly new, their potential is only now being fully realized (Wiltshier and Clarke, 2017). More ludic applications are also now being applied, such as 'serious games' (Mortara, Catalano, Bellotti, Fiucci, Houry-Panchetti & Petridis, 2014). There is a particular need for research on how visitors experience such technology, and whether it increases their level of engagement. There are important questions about how these technologies are being developed and applied, for example in "smart tourism" contexts (Gretzel, Koo, Sigala & Xiang, 2015). The development of new technologies also creates a need to analyse stakeholder relationships, particularly in terms of who benefits from and who pays for the considerable investment required (Tscheu & Buhalis, 2016).

The growing circulation of content for tourists via new technologies also raises questions about the cultural basis of cultural tourism in the future. We have been used to situations where host cultures are presented to visitors, but the simple tourist-host binary is beginning to fade as mobilities become more complex. In particular we now have large numbers of people living (semi-permanently) outside their countries of origin. The growing mix of tourists, expats, refugees, third culture kids and other mobile populations is bringing the very notion of sedentary society into question in some areas. In these situations the idea of a fixed host culture becomes absurd. More attention is therefore being paid to more fluid concepts such as

trans-modern culture. Originating in the ideas of Rodríguez (1989, 2011) transmodernity represents a new paradigm which transcends the crisis of modernity while taking up its outstanding challenges (equality, justice, freedom), while maintaining postmodern criticism (Dussel, 2012). A transmodern perspective has already been developed in the study of the authenticity of cultural tourism experiences by Ivanovich and Saayman (2015), who argue that transformatory experience as a transmodern phenomenon is characterized by lasting personal transformation in opposition to the short-lived peak, temporal experiences of postmodern tourism. Such new cultural perspectives offer the possibility of avoiding the straightjacket of either a modern or postmodern interpretation of culture and coming to new insights that reflect the plurality and interpenetration of the contemporary world.

A broader trans-modern view might also help tackle the problem of the hegemony of the English language in tourism research. The power of the language has limited the horizons of many working in the Anglo-Saxon system. Rather than embracing linguistic diversity, journals are increasingly dominated by production in English. It seems ironic that in a field where there are many pleas for minority voices to be heard, English is increasingly the language such pleas have to be made in (Korstanje, 2010). Finding ways of increasing linguistic diversity in cultural tourism research would open up the field to more diverse concepts of such basic elements such as 'culture' and 'heritage' (which has different connotations from the French term *Patrimoine*, for example).

4 Conclusions

This brief review has underlined the rapid growth in cultural tourism scholarship, which has developed into a well-defined field encompassing multi-disciplinary perspectives. The optimism expressed in the future growth of cultural tourism demand in the UNWTO report (2018) makes it almost certain that this field will continue to expand. In some senses, this growth may undermine the coherence of cultural tourism as an object of study, as lines of enquiry continue to diverge, tracing the fragmentation and diversification of cultural tourism demand and supply. To some extent, cultural tourism research has already spawned a number of extremely fruitful sub-sectors, such as cultural heritage tourism, film-induced tourism and literary tourism. This opens up new opportunities for cross-fertilisation with new academic fields, but it may also harbour the danger of removing the study of cultural tourism from its original social science base. The relative infrequency with which reference is now made to some of the cornerstones of cultural sociology, such as Bourdieu's (1984) study of the role of taste in consumption, is one sign of this.

The vitality of the field is reflected by the many debates that have emerged about the antecedents and effects of cultural tourism experiences, and the way in which these are presented or staged. There still seems to be more focus on experience consumption rather than production, which means that power relations affecting the representation of culture in tourism are often assumed rather than analysed in detail. Questions of power also seem to be obscured by the continuing focus on the individual cultural consumer, rather than social groups and the dynamics between them. New technologies are now making it possible to study the behaviour of crowds and the interactions of groups via social media to gauge their reactions to cultural phenomena and their fellow tourists. These should offer new opportunities in future to study group dynamics and the interactions between individual tourists, residents and other actors.

The dynamism of cultural tourism also makes it likely that many new research avenues will open up in future. One of the biggest challenges will be to chart the rapidly changing meanings and interpretations of the term 'culture', which in turn has significant implications for the definition of cultural tourism. The increasing application of technology in cultural tourism and the resulting overlaps between real world and virtual experiences will no doubt be one important area of investigation. But at a much more fundamental level there are significant challenges in understanding how broader social changes, such as the increasing mixing and mobility of different cultural and social groups, will impact on the production and consumption of culture by tourists.

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Bio

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Figure 1: Cultural tourism publications 1990-2016 (source: Google scholar)

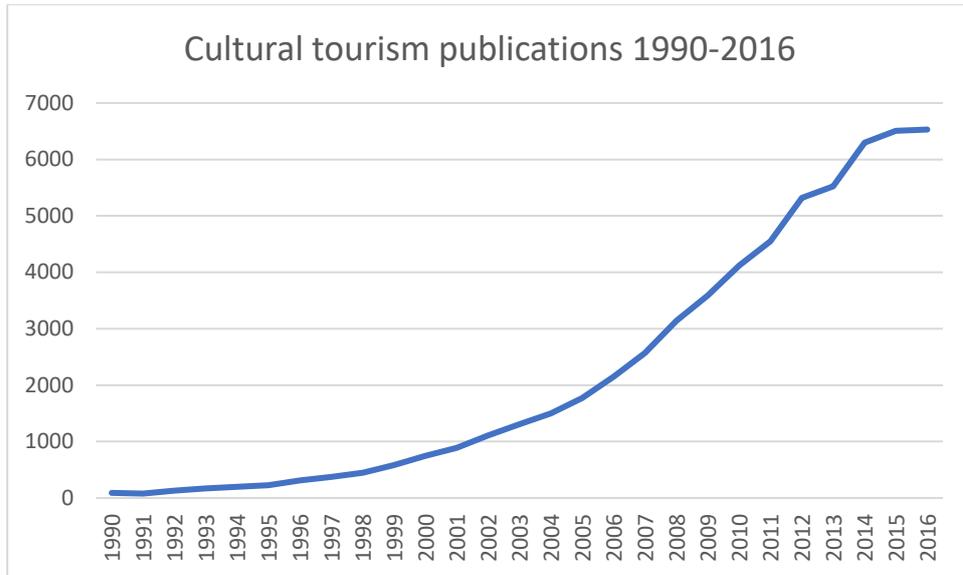


Figure 2

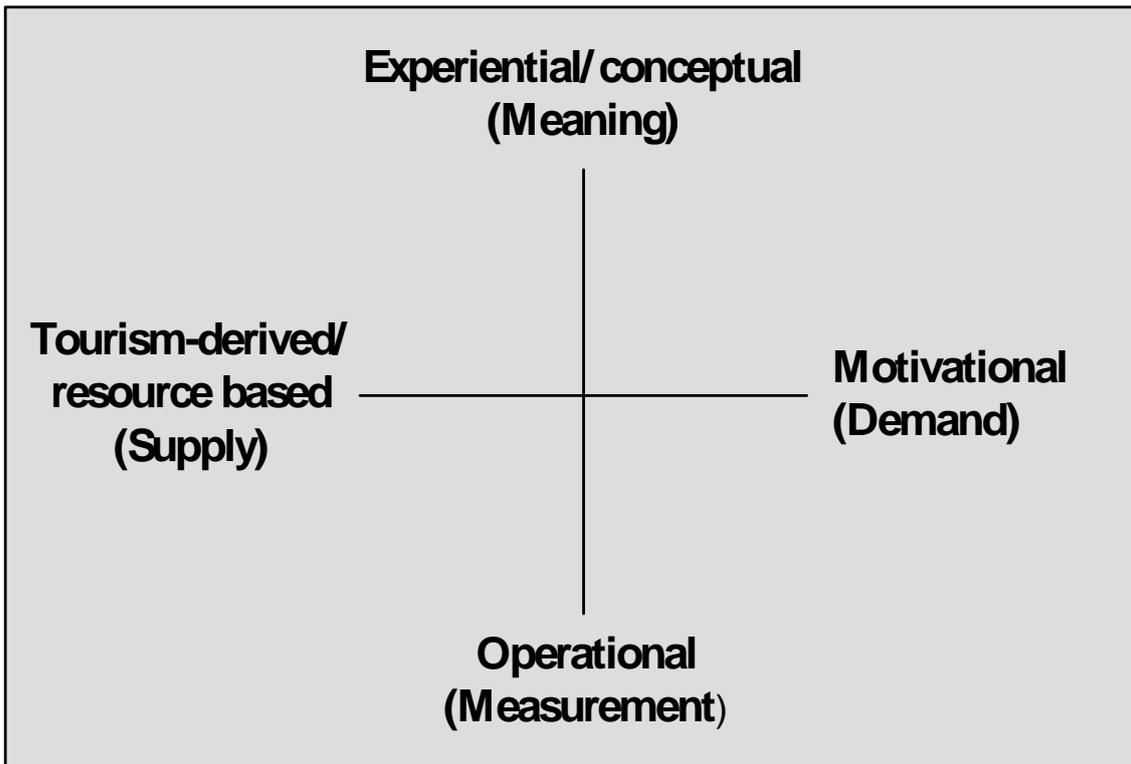


Figure 3

