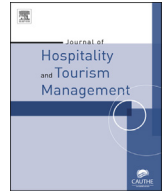


Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

journal homepage: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-hospitality-and-tourism-management>

Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends

Greg Richards

Academy for Leisure Breda University, Postbus 3917, 4800 DX, Breda, The Netherlands



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 16 March 2018
Accepted 29 March 2018

Keywords:
Cultural tourism
Tangible heritage
Intangible heritage
Indigenous tourism
Cultural consumption

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.

© 2018 The Authors.

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 ([Ivanovic, 2008](#); [Smith, 2003](#)) and a growing range of research papers appeared, linked to many different theoretical and methodological approaches ([Richards & Munsters, 2010](#), [Smith & 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

E-mail address: Richards.g@nhtv.nl.

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 (Allen et al., 2015; Du Cros & McKercher, 2014; Richards, 1996).

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 Fig. 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. Du Cros &

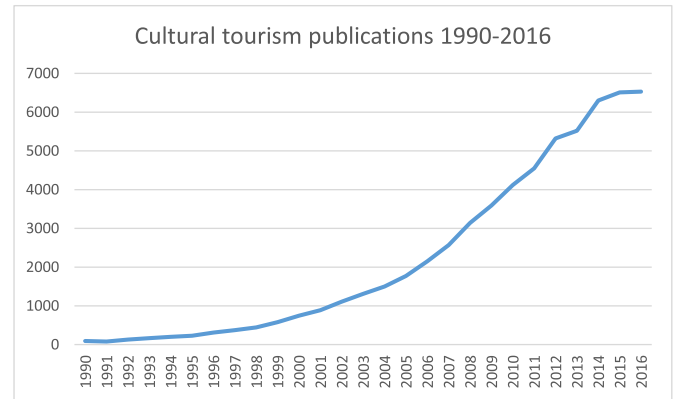


Fig. 1. Cultural tourism publications 1990–2016 (source: Google scholar).

McKercher, 2014; Smith & Richards, 2013). 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.

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 & McKercher, 2014), visits to attractions and events (Pulido-Fernández & 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,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7420280>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7420280>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)