

Book Review

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Rethinking Cultural Tourism

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Understanding the past, current, and future trajectory of cultural tourism has been the major focus of both scholars and industry stakeholders engaged both in the culture and tourism sectors. As an influential scholar at the leading edge of cultural tourism and creative tourism studies, Richards' *Rethinking cultural tourism* reviews the evolution of cultural tourism from the 1990s to the current research agenda, overviewing the work of major cultural tourism scholars. Over six chapters, the book discusses cultural tourism actors (consumers and producers), contexts (cultural attractions, creative cities, and regions, events), consequences and effects, as well as cultural tourism practices.

In Chapter 1, through a review of the various cultural, mobility, performative, creative, curatorial 'turns', Richard discusses the essential concept of 'co-creation'. This requires tourists to become co-producers of the destination and to contribute more knowledge and skills when experiencing local everyday life. The cultural turn allows tourist to experience different cultures and daily life in an unfamiliar environment. The influence of globalisation, which shapes cultural differences, coupled with increased mobility, has driven culture to become "the ubiquitous global object of tourism consumption" (p.5). The performative turn, on the other hand, highlighted the role of interaction among tourists, and between tourist and cultural tourism providers. Furthermore, the creative turn drives the development of creative spaces, creative spectacles, and creative tourism in both urban and regional contexts. Finally, the curatorial turn describes how the transformation of art curators from aesthetics to value and connects this process to placemaking. Chapters 2–5 raise different research questions: how cultural tourism practices come to be through the interactions of actors and structures (Chapter 2); how social contexts shape cultural tourism activities, and how they are shaped by the dynamics of cultural tourism (Chapter 3); what the definition of cultural tourism from the perspective of practice-based research is (Chapter 4), and what cultural tourism practices are developing in new urban tourism (Chapter 5).

Chapter 2 focuses on both consumers' and producers' roles as 'actors' in cultural tourism by examining their action through interaction and relationalities. It introduces past and present research on the segmentation of cultural tourism audience, their

demographic, behaviour, gender, consumption, diversity, identity, power relations, as well as non-human actors. Traditional research separates the role of consumers and producers; after the 1990s, however, cultural tourism started focusing on co-creation experiences. Chapter 3 categorises cultural tourism attractions according to their form (present to past) and function (education and entertainment). Furthermore, it also discusses new cultural tourism spaces such as street art, cultural clusters (districts), eventification, and the 'Bilbao Effect'. Richards demonstrates the evolution and changing context of cultural tourism, which goes hand in hand with the constantly changing definition of 'culture': a multifaceted, dynamic, and ambivalent concept that is hard to set into a fixed classification. In addition, the analysis of the cultural tourism context requires an understanding of the cultural field as a socially constructed structure.

Chapter 4 introduces cultural tourism practices as socially engaged practices that are sustained by actors and redefine the relationship between actors and context. The chapter discusses the consequences/effects of these practices from several perspectives, such as authenticity, economy, society, mass tourism, place image, public policy, and provides new conceptual definitions. This part highlights the cultural experiences co-created between actors and social contexts, which connects the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 5 introduces the relational concepts of rituals and the dynamics of cultural tourism practices to highlight the relationship between cultural tourism and placemaking. Cultural tourists help to co-create new creative places. Other topics such as the difference between cultural tourism and creative tourism, tourist photography, gastronomy, walking culture, new urban tourism, and time-shifting are also introduced in this chapter. Chapter 6 explores emerging research agendas on the materials and resources of cultural tourism practices, highlighting six emerging research questions and five research challenges. One emerging topic is around storytelling skills, which can be important for both cultural tourism consumers and producers. New research methods such as the time-space mapping as well as powerful research networks such as ATLAS and UNITWIN are also introduced in this part.

This book encompasses a dynamic range of cultural tourism elements, from tangible and 'high' cultures such as museums and monuments to intangible popular and everyday cultures disseminated through events, media content, and new technology. In the book, the reader will find interesting combinations of concepts, such as Emotional Energy, co-creation, and rituals. Chapter 5, for example, describes creative tourism as characterised by "...actors being able to generate more Emotional Energy from the new practice of creative tourism" (p.134), which distinguishes it from cultural tourism. For readers interested in a comprehensive introduction to creative tourism studies, *Towards a research agenda for creative tourism: developments, diversity, and dynamics* (Duxbury and Richards, 2019) would make a great reading combination.

It is worth noting that the readers may also find a few deficiencies in the book that are worth discussing but have been neglected by the author. In the discussion about creative placemaking, the author states that "the design of creative places should consider the use of both endogenous and exogenous resources" (p.131). However, the 'neo-endogenous' concept has been largely developed in relation to community development in regional contexts and in rural and relational placemaking (see, for example, Bock, 2016; Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019), an aspect that is not considered in the book. This deficiency is likely connected to the unbalanced focus between urban and rural creativities in the book: although the book emphasises cultural tourism in urban and regional contexts, the discussion largely focuses on urban-based concepts and case studies such as urban art

museums, creative cities, and cultural districts/clusters. The book mentions ‘city’ and ‘urban’ 595 times, but ‘rural’ and ‘regional’ only 56 times. However, scholars such as Woods (2012) have discussed the significant difference between creative rural and creative cities/urban areas. Therefore, more research attention needs to be placed on rural creativity and cultural tourism.

Overall, *Rethinking cultural tourism* is an excellent introduction to the theoretical development of cultural tourism, but also provides a lot of case studies to further explain and discuss the complexity of these theories. The book also focuses on rethinking, redefining, and reevaluating cultural tourism practices by exploring new, relational, and creative tourism-based models of cultural tourism that challenge existing research. In particular, Richards’ work promotes an active type of placemaking through co-creation, education, and learning, occurring in various forms of cultural tourism. People interested in culture, placemaking, cultural tourism and hospitality, as well as tourism stakeholders who focusing on the development of creative tourism should find this book very useful.

References

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