Culture and cultures in tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Culture and cultures in tourism

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ABSTRACT

In this special issue of Anatolia, we explore a number of new trends and products related to cultural tourism, searching for a deeper understanding of how culture is becoming a central factor of attraction in tourism. Contributed papers deal with a number of on-going trends in cultural tourism, including the importance of heritage valuing for sustainability of destinations, the raising wave of religious travels in Arab countries recently opening to tourism, or the analysis of interactions between cultural visitors and local residents.

Culture has become a key product in the international tourism market, with tourists engaged in cultural activities accounting for 40% of international arrivals in 2016 (UNWTO, 2016). Destinations build on cultural supplies to conform their tourism offer, given the interest of visitors for cultural attractions (OECD, 2009). City tourism relies on culture as a major product (ETC, 2005), while heritage-based tourism provides benefits not only for interested visitors, but for the resident population able to preserve their memories while improving cultural opportunities at the local level (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

In this context, important efforts have been devoted to characterize the so-called "cultural tourist" in literature. Classifications employed by researchers include the focus on the type of activities pursued by tourists, as visitors of museums, exhibitions, events, fairs, etc. The typology of cultural tourists defined by scholars is large in this regard, relying on motivations, interests, experiences, or pursued activities of tourists (Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). Further from the level of centrality of culture for the visitor's choice to travel, researchers also consider the depth of the experience at destinations as a classifying factor. Van der Ark and Richards (2006) recognize that the level of enjoyment of the cultural experience depends on the cultural capital endowed by the visitor, mainly relying on his/her personal characteristics, or even the specific tourism product chosen by visitors defining each particular holiday's experience.

A natural extension in theory and practice of this type of tourism leads to the increasingly present "experiential tourism", becoming a new trend in the global markets. Competitive advantages of destinations progressively rely in the capacity of local population to become enrolled with visitors, sharing their local culture, and taking advantage of tourism as a positive activity for the community from the economic, social, and personal side. Increasing impact of mass tourism in popular destinations result in negative externalities for resident population, as recent *tourismphobia* episodes have been remarking. However, when travelling, people always have the possibility of discovering new cultures, and this motive is becoming the central reason for an increasing number of trips internationally. Globalization is making the world smaller and new technologies connect people from one continent

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to another. New accommodation proposals such as Airbnb make travelling more affordable, and new markets open for people and families ready to discover the world.

In this special issue of *Anatolia*, we explore a number of new trends and products related to cultural tourism, searching for a deeper understanding of how culture is becoming a central factor of attraction in tourism. Some of them include the importance of heritage and cultural tourism for sustainability of destinations, the raising wave of religious travels in Arab countries recently opening to tourism, the way as cultural tourism can contribute to the understanding between people, or even consolidate peace at the regional level, as well as the analysis of interactions between cultural visitors and local residents, revisiting the pioneer hippy travelling experiences in Turkey on the 1960s, and how they shaped young people's culture in those days.

About the papers

In more detail, the volume includes eight papers contributing to the general topic of "culture and cultures in tourism". The first paper on "the relationship between cultural tourist behaviour and destination sustainability" by Artal-Tur, Villena-Navarro and Alamá-Sabater wonders about how cultural tourism can help to foster the sustainability of destinations. Despite efforts devoted to define the "cultural tourist", still little is known about her/his particular behaviour. The paper pursues a double objective: First, they identify the profile of cultural tourists in comparison with visitors not pursuing any cultural activity while travelling; second, and building on econometric modelling, authors compare the behaviour of these two groups in terms of factors influencing expenditure and trip satisfaction. All these findings are putted in context regarding the literature on tourism sustainability. In general, results highlight how cultural tourists show specific characteristics in regards to leisure non-cultural visitors, these being relevant in order to promote economic, social, and cultural sustainability of destinations engaged in cultural products.

The second paper by Sangchumnong and Kozak relies on the study of sustainable cultural heritage tourism in a village in Thailand. Ban Wangka Village is an important Mon community tourist destination in Thailand. However, since tourism arrived many changes have occurred. Sustainable cultural heritage tourism is the key element in the development of this destination, and authors review the Triple Bottom Line strategy and personal interviews that were implemented to develop the destination to prevent unsustainable practices. Results reveal that the social and ethical dimension of the destination has been overshadowed by the economic one, being susceptible of unsustainable practices in the mid-run.

The third paper by Khalid and Chowdhury gets deeper insight on heritage tourism, but from an intangible dimension. Authors focus on seeking how Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is represented and diffused through the social media for the case of Bangladesh. They explore the current role of social media in the transmission of ICH in the virtual world by relying in an exercise of content analysis. The potential roles of social media in the process of preserving ICH offer a space for building awareness, creating knowledge, and diffusion of innovations. All this analysis is made in a country where UNESCO has declared *Baul Songs* in 2008 and *Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving* in 2013 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, stating its importance in Bangladesh as a symbol of identity, dignity, and self-recognition.

The fourth and fifth papers deal with religious tourism, as a new market opening to some Arab countries and their historical context. The paper by Heydari, del Chiappa, and Ghasemi concentrates in exploring the current developments and future prospects opening to the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding cultural and religious tourism. Tourism phenomenon is significantly based on the sociocultural dimensions of any society. This is particularly true in the case of Iran, a country that possesses a large number of cultural heritage and religious attractions. As these authors state, overall tourism policies in Iran can be considered as much more consequential from the standpoint of the country's specific socio-religious context rather than from explicit planning patterns. In this way, the present paper aims in this way to contribute to the emerging scientific debate around the potential growth in

religious tourism development for this outstanding country in the Islamic world that could serve as an example for other countries in the region.

Fifth paper builds on the recognition that in recent decades Muslim travellers have been gaining presence in the world market. Particular tastes and customs of these consumers are increasingly taken into account by the global tourism industry, offering tailored goods, and services to satisfy their demands. The paper of Kupeli, Koç, and Hassan gain insight in the usage of concepts, such as Islamic, veiled, dry, halal, conservative, and sharia-compliant hotels from a critical perspective, pointing to the similarities by considering their specific characteristics. The inconveniencies of the use of different religion-based names are mentioned. As a conclusion, it appears that a conceptual ambiguity is still remaining in the Islamic-based tourism market.

The sixth paper focuses on the case of the Island of Lampedusa regarding the role of cultural tourism and thematic museum exhibitions on bridging the gap between cultures in times of war and refugees' crisis in the Mediterranean and Near East regions. Ruspini, Meloti and Marra highlight the relationships between tourism, migration, and peace in the context of the present refugee crisis. It focuses on the case of Lampedusa, an island that is not only an important tourist destination, but also a major gateway for migrants trying to reach Europe. In 2016, it hosted the first exhibition of the "Museum of Trust and Dialogue for the Mediterranean". Lampedusa is the only local community that was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and in 2017 its mayor received the UNESCO Peace Prize. The research shows how the island is still in search of a balance between local identity and global processes, and discusses its possible role as a social laboratory for peace and mutual understanding. The role of culture becomes central in vehiculizing and allowing the mutual understanding of cultures for neighbouring countries in a clear mix between culture and cultures, the *moto* of the present issue in Anatolia Journal.

Two papers close the volume, highlighting two relevant issues for cultural tourism. The seventh paper by Nazmi Kozak revisits the revolutionary hippy experience taking place in the 1960s and 1970s, and how these particular encounters between inspired visitors and local population helped to enrich the young people's horizons in Turkey and all along their historical route from Istanbul to Nepal and India. To enrich secondary data on the historical event, the study majorly builds on primary data based on personal interviews with active actors of that times obtained through the oral history interview method. Pictures of the main places where hippies remained in Istanbul also accompany the paper by prof. Kozak in a very appealing narrative on tourism, history, and cultural encounters. The study documents the aforementioned cultural interactions influencing both hippies and Turkish youngsters, through the lens of the tourism literature.

Finally, the eight paper by Rejón-Guardia, Antonia García-Sastre, and Alemany analyses new sport events taking place in Mallorca, Spain, employing the cultural attributes of tourists as participants. Under the title of "the potential benefits of hikers as cultural tourists" they highlight existing differences between hard and soft behaviour of participants. As a result, the present study demonstrates the significance of the degree of complementarity between engagement in sports activities and consumption of cultural activities. The main conclusion is that active tourists who spend less time on sports activities spend more time on cultural activities. This binomial should be taken into consideration by public and private tourism management bodies, who currently suggest that sports and cultural tourism products are substitutes for each other, when, in fact, they are complementary.

In sum, a number of contributions compound the current special issue of *Anatolia* under the topic of "Culture and Cultures in Tourism". This is an important topic for the tourism industry in current times, that would be no doubt gaining importance in the near future, as the world continues to become smaller, and people's culture become more mixed thanks among other things to tourism.

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Notes on contributor

Andres Artal-Tur is an associate professor at Technical University of Cartagena (Spain). His main research interest is in the analysis of tourist behaviour, destination planning, culture and sustainability. He has published his research findings in a number of impact journals.

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