Tourismification of Cultural Landscapes : A Discussion Note

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Tourismification of Cultural Landscapes: A Discussion Note

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Abstract: Tourism development now affects most, if not all, places in the world. Obviously, the natural, cultural and historical resources of places and regions differ in terms of tourism potential. The challenge for academic researchers lies in understanding the dynamics of the transformation process of cultural landscapes 'heritage of the past'. In the 21st century, new patterns of users and uses emerge, such as leisure, recreation and tourism, with the risk of unbalancing traditional values and territorial cohesion. The economic driving forces are strong and the arguments and power of conservationists tend to be weak.

The analyses of patterns and processes in cultural landscapes and monitoring the impact of tourismification in different geographical and socio-political contexts have a high priority on the research agenda. By definition this implies a multidisciplinary approach.

Key words: Cultural landscapes, tourismification, territorial coherence, heritage management

1 Introduction

Very much in reaction to an overwhelming wave of globalisation in all domains, there is a trend to redefine the cultural identity of regions with a new emphasis on territorial expressions of history, habitat and heritage. There are many examples of cultural resources becoming driving forces in the process of re-imaging cultural identity and in reinforcing cultural activities. The valorisation of cultural assets effectively supports the clustering of cultural capital with clear territorial links and, as such, creating favourable incubation conditions for sustainable and competitive forms of cultural tourism. The focus of this discussion note is on the interpretation of the process of tourismification irreversibly changing cultural landscapes. Knowledge about this transformation process is necessary to plan and design sustainable tourism destinations and above all to develop efficient management tools.

Two factors are considered to be relevant in categorizing cultural landscapes and their dynamics; 'density of cultural heritage assets' and 'population density'. The two axes analytical model (Fig.1.) includes territorial characteristics in the assessment of tourism potential and refers to the need for specific policies. This approach can be useful to identify the cultural characteristics of a landscape, on the one hand, and the dynamics of tourism, on the other. The two dimensions are setting the framework for the development of policies for local and regional planning and management.

Exploring cultural resources for tourism implies transdisciplinary research and methodological innovations to deal with a complex phenomenon. The challenge to identify and map cultural heritage elements-tangible and intangible-in a pan European context has been explored in the ESPON project 1.3.3 (2004~2006)[1]. Lack of adequate and consistent definitions, poor databases, and a showcase of national and sector differences in defining culture, as a resource for development was the final conclusion of this explorative project. Following the track of that project, the interaction between cultural dynamics and the process of tourismification has been studied in different types of landscapes and geographical contexts[2]. Some aspects of cultural landscapes for tourism will be discussed in this paper.
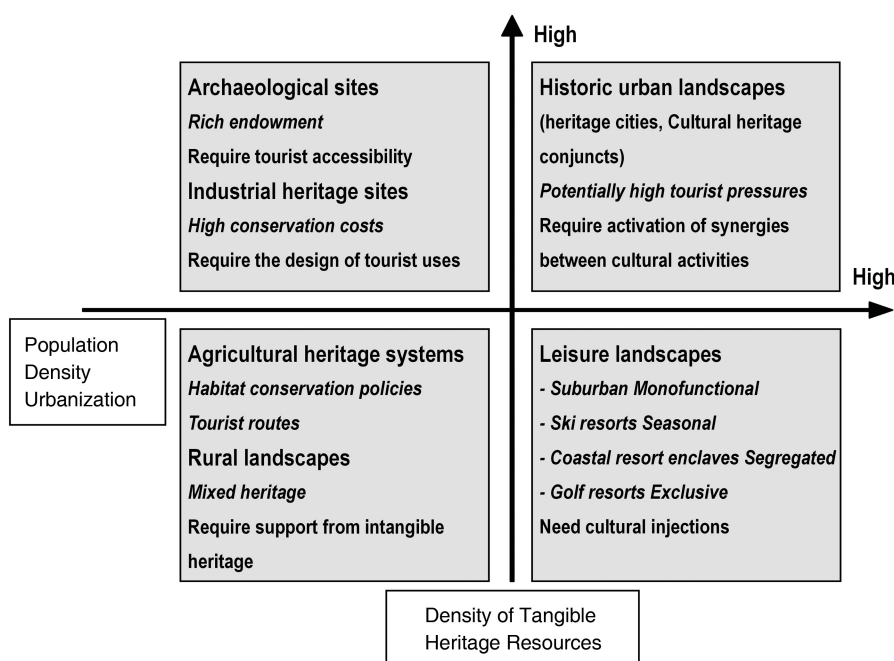
2 Redefining cultural landscapes

The concept of cultural landscapes has since long been introduced in the field of regional studies, based on a geographical construct that links human activi-

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High

Archaeological sites *Rich endowment* Require tourist accessibility **Industrial heritage sites** *High conservation costs* Require the design of tourist uses	**Historic urban landscapes** (heritage cities, Cultural heritage conjuncts) *Potentially high tourist pressures* Require activation of synergies between cultural activities

High

Population
Density
Urbanization

Agricultural heritage systems *Habitat conservation policies* *Tourist routes* **Rural landscapes** *Mixed heritage* Require support from intangible heritage	**Leisure landscapes** - *Suburban Monofunctional* - *Ski resorts Seasonal* - *Coastal resort enclaves Segregated* - *Golf resorts Exclusive* Need cultural injections

Density of Tangible
Heritage Resources

Source:author,based on ESPON 1.3.3(2006:164)

Fig.1 Types of cultural landscapes for tourism

ties with their territory[3]. The human biotope is a complex field of study. Continuity in ways of life in a particular region has generated a unique relationship between local communities and their territory, in association with meanings and values, and shaped by social processes. The renewed search for identity of territories and their communities can be understood as a reaction to globalizing trends in which local roots tend to be associated with nostalgia.

It is only recently that tourism; recreation and leisure are included in the concept of cultural landscape, being a specific category of 'uses' or functions[4]. The current debate on incentives for regional or local development is very much focused on the role of cultural elements and activities in the transformation of landscapes into tourismscapes. 'Tourismscape' refers to the genesis of a complex of interactions between people, place, organisations, objects, all being or becoming connected in tourism related actor-network[5].

Cultural landscapes can indeed play a significant role in creating and attracting new and diversified tourism markets. This perspective became a clear incentive for local and regional authorities, for destination managers and local entrepreneurship to further explore and develop the tourism potentials of a place or region. From a tourism perspective, the main points of interest in this new 'product' are the relationships between culture and scenery, between expectations and experiences, conservation of the traditional and injection of innovative economic activities. Introducing new functions in the various landscapes also leads to a change in the symbolic values for both locals and tourists. A main assumption in this territorial approach is that the symbiosis and conservation of cultural and natural resources is a key factor in the strengthening of regional identities.

However tourism, unlike other activities, can cause irreversible social and spatial mutations in functions, uses and users[3]. Some changes are planned for instance in the context of tourism development projects, other forms of tourism use and impact were not anticipated or expected. Scanning the changes induced in specific landscapes is now a mayor challenge for monitoring tourism activities and their impact.

Different types of cultural landscapes also display specific processes of re ordering and valorising traditional assets. There are many explanations for the variable dynamics, such as the landscape morphology, the social, economic and political context, but also the actual policies concerning nature and heritage conservation, culture and tourism [3]. These are relevant parameters in assessing the divergence of landscapes in terms of carrying capacity, and in managing the claims of new uses and users.

In this discussion note, the emphasis is on spatial aspects of the process of tourismification [6]. This explains the need to identify and map localized sets of tangible and intangible cultural assets, produced and accumulated over time. In most cases, the presence of tangible cultural heritage means a favourable incubation condition for developing cultural activities and as such for a grass-rooted cultural economy of interest for new forms of creative tourism.

3 Cultural landscapes for tourism

The main purpose of constructing a typology of cultural landscapes for tourism is to draw a framework for the analysis of patterns and processes and not in the least, for comparative studies. A categorisation

according to some well defined and measurable parameters allows a better understanding of various patterns and forces in landscape transformation. A typology of spatial categories also leads to a reduction of the complexity of change and to analyse more specifically tourism as an agent of change.

Two specific dimensions have been tested in the European study on spatial aspects of cultural resources in Europe [1].

1. Population density / degree of urbanisation
2. Density of tangible heritage assets

In the first place, the *degree of urbanization –* by definition related to population density - is most relevant to the type of tourism and leisure landscape that is emerging. Leisure destinations for the urban dwellers with a typical centrifugal flow of movements differ significantly from the centripetal flows to urban destinations for city trips, cultural activities, shopping. Distinct spatial categories, such as the rural countryside, the peri-urban leisure and sport zones and the multifunctional urban areas, are in fact complementarily in their social function for visitors and residents. Anyhow, the sharp dividing lines between work and leisure time, between travel for work or for pleasure, cultural activities and entertainment are fading away[7]. This social phenomenon also affects the spatial structure and functional mix in leisure and tourism environments.

Nevertheless in many regions, the gap between densely populated urban areas and the rural, agricultural or natural countryside in terms of tourism intensity, space claims and uses, perception and experiences, remains considerable. The tourist opportunity spectrum in urban or in rural areas differs, so do the motivations and activities of visitors.

There are multiple examples of territories where urbanization, modern agricultural practices and new concepts of leisure landscapes (holiday camps, wellness resorts, ski stations, etc) are a threat for the conservation of valuable natural and cultural landscapes.

The shift from traditional agriculture to agri-business, from extensive recreation in the countryside to designed leisure areas and sign-posted tourist routes, the huge investments made to facilitate high accessibility for different travel modes, all have a price; conservation policies for cultural heritage are not often compatible with such development goals[8, 9].

The dilemma between freezing landscapes of the past (rural hamlets, old fishing villages, agricultural habitat systems, traditional handicraft places, pre-industrial working sites, etc.) and injecting new economic activities cannot be easily solved, nor is there a universal best practice model of development. Historic cultural landscapes are under pressure, particularly in the densely populated parts of Europe. In fact the spatial clustering of cultural heritage elements in urban areas is inherent to the history and genesis of most cities. A concentration of historical buildings, museums and monuments belongs to typical cityscape of many cities. Moreover, cultural events, rooted in history and local traditions, tend to follow a similar spatial distribution pattern [10].

However, not all urban areas have inherited a rich past on which to build a cultural economy in the 21st century. Tourism researchers have paid much less attention to under-endowed urban areas or to vast, recently urbanized areas with few or no historical landmarks. The creation of new leisure landscapes to meet current demand and hence benefit from the expanding leisure economy is on top of the developers' agenda. The trick seems to be; creating new tourism magnets in the urban periphery with eye-catching modern architecture for museums, concert halls, convention centres, multifunctional leisure palaces, hotels, theme parks, etc. In fact successful suburban leisure clusters are also becoming part of the urban dynamics in the tourism market. Designed as leisure landscapes for the urban population, these peri-urban destinations gradually appear on the mental map of tourism business and the tourist.

Table 1　Cultural landscapes for tourism: assets and key issues

Assets	Key Issues
Diversity	Accessibility and planning
Space	Clustering and routes
Discovery	
Coherence of cultural heritage elements	Conservation and resource management
Revival of intangible cultural heritage	Carrying capacity and visitor management
	Impact of seasonality
Wide range of cultural and leisure opportunities and activities	Accommodation
	Dependency on tourism revenues and leakages
Unique Tourist Opportunity Spectrum（TOS）	Decision power of local stakeholders

Source: author

The second dimension, *the cultural endowment of the territory* or the density of tangible cultural heritage elements has proven to be highly relevant when assessing the tourism potential of cultural landscapes. For instance, when the parameter is restricted to the presence of tangible cultural heritage elements such as museums and monuments only, it is possible to construct a density index. This makes it possible to distinguish, in a quantitative way, regions with high or low densities of tangible heritage elements [1].

The orientation of cultural landscapes to tourism depends on three factors mainly, firstly the protection and conservation policies regarding tangible heritage, secondly the skills and creativity in transforming cultural resources into drivers of a cultural economy. The third and most crucial factor is the capacity to integrate cultural assets in a dynamic and innovative tourism destination development.

Surely, the tourism potential of a territory does not depend on the quantity of heritage sites, buildings and artefacts only, but most of all on the quality of conservation, the creativity of landscaping maintaining the historical coherence between buildings, landscapes and artefacts. In addition the richness of the territorial endowment can be supported significantly by specific expressions or interactions with intangible heritage assets. Many urban events are an exponent of this trend.

Nevertheless, the range of criteria to assess the tourism potential of cultural resources and sites remains a point of discussion. The search for quantitative criteria is very understandable in comparative and competitive situations in particular. Numbers of heritage buildings, sites, artefacts, elements, the scale of it and density indices are seen as 'hard' indicators. However several case studies have proven that other factors such as diversity, variation and territorial coherence of the cultural resources are even more critical issues.

Some types of cultural landscapes can illustrate more clearly the dynamics and interaction between the vectors urbanization and cultural endowment than others. So far, urban landscapes, historical cities, with a rich cultural endowment have caught most attention from tourism researchers and planners[11].

Cultural landscapes where there is much less awareness about their cultural endowment, little strategic vision or, an ongoing debate about their tourism vocation are a priority on the future research agenda[12]. A brief comment on some characteristics in each type of cultural landscape is here included as an incentive for further discussion and reflection on the dynamics of change induced by leisure, recreation and tourism.

4 Leisure landscapes

As a spatial concept this is a new category in the field of environmental planning. So far the leisure function never was considered to be dominant or manifest, but social trends and new economic realities are rapidly changing the landscape map [13]. Many leisure landscapes with a poor cultural endowment (see Fig.1) have been designed as residential areas, many of them as resorts for seasonal use by tourists. This manifest invasion of tourism functions in rural, coastal and natural landscapes is irreversibly changing the morphology, affecting the traditional ways of life and eventually the perceived images[14]. For instance the spatial claims and impacts of ski, golf and coastal resorts are huge. The scenario of almost mono-functional tourism landscapes is expanding universally with only occasional touches of vernacular architecture that refers to the place or the region. With some exceptions, this type of urbanised areas, in general with a low population density, and seasonal occupancy, have limited in cultural resources. A low density of cultural assets characterizes most newly built tourist villages, ski resorts, seaside developments and golf destinations. As these destinations mature they are gradually looking for more social coherence and cultural vitality; these 21st century tourism urbanization areas are the expression of a new type of cultural landscape "the (temporary) habitat of a new leisure society" [15].

5 Industrial landscapes

Industrial activities have marked landscapes in different periods and often in a most dramatic way, leaving extensive and deteriorated landscapes, now in search of a new functions and alternative environmental qualities. Although the type of industry, the scale of the plants and infrastructure, the imbedding in the natural landscape and the design of the residential areas give rise to a wide variety of industrial landscapes, they do face common problems and challenges[16,17]. Conservation of industrial heritage landscapes includes all the elements of the former sites, such as coal and ore mines, quarries, railway or canal systems, furnaces, workers' homes and the social infrastructure of these communities. For example, the case of the Blaenavon area provides evidence of the pre-eminence of South Wales as the world's major producer of iron and coal in the 19th century. The landscape constitutes an exceptional illustration in

material form of the social and economic structure of industry during that period and its components together make up an outstanding and remarkably complete example of a 19th century industrial landscape.

Turning industrial landscapes into destinations for cultural heritage tourism remains a mayor challenge in many countries. The scale of the buildings and their technical infrastructure, the imposing architecture and "industrious" outlook of the scenery, the intangible heritage coloured by stories of misery and exploitation, of unhealthy living conditions and social conflicts is appreciated as part of our history, but not really a motivation for many to visit the sites, unless for educational purposes.

It can be concluded that the tourismification of industrial landscapes faces a number of problems, such as their location and environmental context, the huge costs of conservation of the infrastructure and the difficulties of inserting new uses in old buildings. In addition, there is a problem of image and ownership of the sites. However, examples of successful renovation projects in which leisure and tourism are catalysts do exist.

6 Archaeological sites

The contrast between the attraction of industrial and archaeological sites is huge. The fascination of the far past, imagination about Romans and Greeks civilizing other regions, the geographical situation of many archaeological sites in the Mediterranean basin, are important magnets for tourists. It is a well-known fact that the early days of travelling were inspired and motivated by history. Cultural tourism was oriented towards regions with a rich endowment of tangible heritage. Numerous archaeological sites and artefacts are spread throughout the territory; rural areas do have their share, but might have fewer opportunities to develop these resources into tourism destinations.

The distinction between archaeological sites in terms of tourism potential, relates to factors such as accessibility of the site, distance to the nearest tourist resort, climate and, by no means least, the attention given by national tourist boards in international image building and marketing narratives. In terms of accessibility for tourists and direct impact on the urban economy, urban archaeological sites enjoy certain advantages. On the other side of the balance, irrespective of their size and historical importance, archaeological sites that are situated in an urban environment are facing competition from different land users and uses, the impact of decisions by policymakers and a social discourse among the different stakeholders. Hence, this confirms the observation that the richness in terms of quantity and quality of the heritage endowment (tangible and intangible) of a site is not the only indicator for tourism potential.

7 Rural landscapes

It is not only the most typical agricultural landscapes such as wine regions that are being discovered by tourism; in fact, the interest - mainly from urban residents - for various types of rural landscapes is much older and persistent and has taken many forms [18]. The concept of a "cultural rural landscape" covers a wide variety of territories, with multiple expressions of their history[19]. The romantic image of rural landscapes endowed with history and with many interesting landmarks, often with scattered heritage attractions has strongly influenced the general appreciation of cultural heritage landscapes with a tourism vocation[20]. However, this rather European interpretation of cultural tourismscapes needs to be adapted when focusing on for instance the vast nomadic landscapes such as the Mongolian grass lands[21] In fact, the very low density of tourism activities in these vast areas might be the best safeguard for the future protection of the cultural landscape.

The role of tourism as a catalyst in the metamorphosis of landscapes is not only a matter of mega trends in society, such as urbanization or cultural revival, but also of evolution in values and attitudes. These trends are supporting the emergence of products that capitalize on the cultural resources of a certain territory. The beauty and harmony of scenic landscapes are highly valued as well as the quality of infrastructure, green spaces and recreation facilities. This explains why scenic landscapes are subject to fundamental economic and socio-cultural changes driven by leisure and tourism. Positive spin-offs of a tourismification of landscapes often are: a greater concern for the quality of the environment, the natural resources and improved environmental management and planning of the area. Tourism can raise local awareness about the value of natural resources, in the same way as it can about the value of the cultural heritage of a community.

8 Paradoxes and conflicts in heritage management

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with and value today, and what we pass on to future

generations. Our cultural and natural landscapes are both irreplaceable resources of life and inspiration, but an ubiquitous dilemma between conservation and development cannot be denied. This reinforces the need to measure and manage the processes of transformation. The development of management tools has become a high priority to support the crucial steps in decision making that need to be taken. More knowledge is required about the values and uses of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) and the role of icons & landmarks as carriers of local identity.

The current challenge for researchers and planners is to find ways to create new synergies between cultural assets. The objectives are clearly outlined; to sustain territorial uniqueness and to some extent authenticity and to capitalise on the global market trends in cultural tourism. Clearly, all intervention in traditional landscapes holds the risk of unbalancing a long established stability, of generating higher mobility and as a consequence more pressure on the environment. Above all new space claims and users' categories might interfere with the territorial cohesion and historical setting of cultural heritage patterns.

Therefore it is the task of the academic communities in collaboration with national authorities and international organisations to develop skills to manage monitor and evaluate changes in the use of heritage resources. This implies a transdisciplinary approach. A wide knowledge about history is a first requirement to identify tangible heritage resources, prior to establishing conservation policies. Considerations about vulnerability of specific types of heritage and the environment are guiding the plans for new functions, uses and users and eventually the ways of valorisation.

Introducing tourism activities in whatever cultural landscape will irreversibly induce new market dependencies. Orientation towards the leisure economy and the commoditisation of cultural resources affect the traditional activities in the area. As a rule this diversification of the economic basis and livelihood of local communities has a definite impact on the social structure and way of life.

Heritage management, whether of tangible or intangible assets of a territory, implies connecting local and global values and exploring ways to match conservation with new uses and interpretations by different stakeholders. Conflicts about dissonant interpretations can hardly be avoided; since heritage holds different values for different people and in addition these values change over time, so does the knowledge and interpretation of the past.

So far, very little scientific research has been done on the importance of intangible heritage in the creation of tourism landscapes. Creative marketers will soon rediscover (or reinvent) many 'typical' 'local' ' 'authentic' 'folkloristic', 'traditional', legends and stories, personalities and events in order to support the image marketing of the region. The very nature and variety of intangible heritage and in some cases the 'mobility' of these assets can lead to situations of dissociation between heritage and its original territory. One strategy - apparently successful in many places -to reconnects with the roots - is the organisation of thematic events using the historical assets as icons and landmarks.

The ultimate paradox is between the conservation policies for heritage sites and 'protected' cultural landscapes and development strategies geared at capitalising on the tourism potential. Despite the fact of numerous publications and reports on case studies, there still is no blue print of consensus. The fact is that conservation of heritage, a view that is widely supported, lacks financial resources. Tourism is one of the sources of income, if not the only one. In addition the tourism industry is maturing and looking for more sustainable markets and products; cultural tourism, heritage tourism might be the best options now.

9 Conclusion: a challenging research agenda

Heritage for tourism, tourism for heritage, whatever the emphasis or the geographic situation, cultural landscapes are under pressure from tourism. Gradually a code of conduct and understanding has been registered in the minds of the decision makers, planners and tourism marketers. There is no doubt that cultural landscapes are exceptionally interesting resources for the development of cultural tourism and, as such, for the local economy, but a number of conditions need to be respected[22]. The credo of conservation might become rather complicated, whenever new uses of old infrastructures and buildings are being discussed. Above all, anticipation of the direct and indirect impact of tourism on each site and territory cannot be deducted from a guidebook and there is no blue print for the "best" heritage management.

The transformation from a cultural landscape to a tourism landscape requires profound knowledge of the local situation and the external influences and, above all, a realistic assessment of the assets. In this process, consensus amongst local stakeholders is

valuable, but not always encountered; the level of education, the financial involvement, the ownership patterns and traditions and, above all, the cultural affinity with the heritage in situ might create divergences in the values and expectations. Aspects such as accessibility, site management, educational mission, and even marketing strategies and, eventually, the quality control of resources can now count on more support.

It is highly relevant to observe that the revalorization of cultural heritage can lead to a confirmation of territorial cultural identity, become an incentive for cultural creativity, and support a greater sense of place and pride or, on the contrary, be perceived as exogenous.

A priority for future research in this field is to study -in depth- the different aspects and forces behind the process of transformation; from a production landscape to a leisure landscape, from a coherent landscape to a landscape marked by "tourism enclaves" or even fully functional as a tourismscape. While the trans-disciplinary approach of tourism research is one of its major strengths and opens wide perspectives, since it allows various viewpoints, it is arguably also its greatest weakness. There still is little agreement about concepts, such as cultural landscapes, nor about the definition of heritage resources and their coherence, not even about the optimal development model for leisure and tourism landscapes in the future. Therefore a discussion note cannot end with firm conclusions.

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基于文化景观的旅游化讨论

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摘　要：文化景观在建立和吸引新的和多样化的旅游市场方面确实可以发挥重要作用,这个观点促使地方当局鼓励当地管理人员和企业家进一步探索和发展该地区的旅游潜力。从旅游的角度看,这个新"产品"的主要兴趣点是文化和自然风光、期望和经验以及保护传统和注入创新的经济活动之间的关系。在各种景观中引入新的职能也导致当地人和游客的象征性价值的改变。这一区域性做法的一个主要假设在于文化和自然资源的共生和保护是加强区域特征的关键因素。本文讨论的重点是对改变文化景观这一不可逆转的旅游化过程的解释。了解这一转变过程对于规划和设计可持续的旅游目的地,以及最重要的制定有效的管理工具是必要的。

文化景观向旅游景观的转变需要深刻地了解当地情况和外部影响,尤其是对资产的现实评估。在这个过程中,当地利益相关者之间的协商并达成一致意见是理想情况,但很难实现。其中,教育水平的差异、金融参与的多少、所有制形式、传统习惯以及最重要的遗产地原真文化都可能产生价值和期望的分歧。对文化遗产的价值进行再评估,可以促使对本土文化的认同,并激励公众的文化创新意识和行为,同时,再评估可以增强当地社区的自豪感和责任感。

旅游和遗产,无论在哪,无论强调哪一方面,无可置疑的是文化景观受到了旅游的冲击。随着旅游的发展,决策者和旅游业者也逐渐意识到这点。然而,文化景观在文化旅游发展、促进当地经济增长方面具有重要作用,但也受到一定条件的限制,如协调保护和开发之间的矛盾。总之,教科书中没有每一个景点发展旅游的直接影响和间接影响的描述,也没有"最好"的遗产管理的蓝本。

今后这一领域研究的首要任务是深入探讨和分析从文化景观向旅游景观、从生产景观向休闲景观、从一个综合性景观向旅游功能型景观转变过程中的各个方面及其驱动因素。这种跨学科的研究方法开辟了旅游学研究的广括前景,这是其优势,但另一方面,由于这种方法带来了各种各样的观点,这无疑也是其最大的弱点。还有一些概念存在争议,比如文化景观,至今也没有关于遗产资源及其连贯性的定义,甚至没有未来休闲景观和旅游景观的最佳发展模式。因此,本文的讨论不能作出确定的结论。

关键词：文化景观;遗产;旅游化