

# The Identification of Cultural Tourism Geographies: Results from a Systematic Literature Review

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
tourism cultural heritage	Tourism development allows the enhancement of the heritage of local cultural resourc- es, expressing the territorial potential. The Systematic Literature Review shown in this pa-
local development SLR	per highlight the relationship between "cultural heritage" and "tourism". The current state of the art and the specific relationships between the contents of the selected publications
	demonstrate that tourism is an indispensable tool in local communication and cultural pro- motion policies and strategies. The qualitative results allow the identification of cultural

tourism geographies that coincide with four thematic clusters not evident in advance.

## Introduction

Cultural heritage is a valuable resource for tourism that can encourage the definition of local development and promotion strategies. The interactions between heritage and tourism lead to the definition of tourism as an increasingly complex economic phenomenon with social and cultural implications. It being associated with the main tourist attractions and means of cultural exchange, cultural heritage has acquired special importance between public decision-makers and local communities (Boc et al., 2022). From a social point of view, the benefits of tourism related to this sector are linked to community pride, tolerance, and a stronger sense of identity (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Attachment to a place positively influences the behaviour of both tourists, in favour of sustainability and the environment, (Zhu & Chiou, 2022) both local residents, influencing their perception and support for tourism development. These effects represent a useful prerequisite to support local governments in the elaboration of more effective policies for the development and management of patrimony (Cao et al., 2021). The themes introduced are reflected especially in the minor contexts of rural areas, which are places of attraction for tourists looking for experiences, authenticity, slowness, and responsibility; the same attributes that were previously considered disadvantageous, are therefore now evaluated as opportunities (Brown & Hall, 2000). Indeed, cultural heritage and tourism are increasingly becoming factors of resilience in areas subject to demographic decline and depopulation (Gómez-Ullate et al., 2020). The challenge is to generate consensus among the inhabitants to develop projects that have a link with social and cultural heritage, also through the support of regional and local authorities (Signes-Pont et al., 2022). As stated by the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism aims to meet the needs of visitors, the environment, and the host communities, through the promotion of the optimal use of environmental resources, respect for local authenticity, support for the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional values, as well as ensuring long-term sustainable economic operations (UNEP & UWTO, 2005). In light of these premises, this article offers an overview of international scien-

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tific production with the aim of carrying out an analysis of the relationship between the two themes mentioned, namely "tourism" and "cultural heritage". This has been possible through the adoption of the methodology of the Systematic Literature Review related to the application of a Cluster Analysis technique. The study provides information from a quantitative point of view, evident in the definition of clus-

Methodology

The literature review is an essential feature of academic research. Indeed, the advancement of knowledge must be built based on existing work (Xiao & Watson, 2005). For this reason, the revision methodology developed in order to define the framework for the analysis of knowledge on the relationship between "tourism" and "cultural heritage" uses software support for the management of bibliographic data. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) process is aimed at quantitatively systematizing the most current and relevant conceptual and applicative knowledge described in the literature on the subject. The consequential Cluster Analysis (CA) technique allows to interpret qualitatively the literature selected by the SLR process, in order to identify the main areas of research and then arrive at a structured definition of the "phenomenon" of interest (Chieffallo, 2021).

Specifically, the SLR makes it possible to identify existing studies, select and evaluate contributions, analyze and synthesize data, and report outcomes to allow clear results to be drawn (Chieffallo et al., 2023). As developed in Anwer & Aftab (2017), the SLR process includes the following steps:

- 1. Define the research question representing the research objectives. In the present case, the research question used is: "What are the main lines of research on the enhancement of cultural heritage for tourism?"
- 2. Find the keywords to form the query string. Starting from the research questions defined in the previous point, the search string used will be: "cultural heritage" AND "tourism".
- 3. Define the search space to get the data. In this study, reference is made only to the Scopus database, which, although the only source of research, is a sufficiently comprehensive starting point to identify the areas within which research activity should be located.

ters useful to group the obtained data into macro-themes, that qualitatively, hesitate in the description of the contents of each cluster obtained. This activity is part of the research project admitted to funding under the "Municipal Doctorates" call of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion - Director General's Decree no. 288/2022, of which Professor Annunziata Palermo is the scientific director.

- 4. Set criteria to include or exclude documents. The documents used are all Open access and in English language.
- 5. Extracting literature. The data are extracted using the criteria defined in the previous step; in this case, the number of documents analysed is 960 articles.
- 6. Evaluate the quality of the studies carried out. For a useful and successful review, we consider the keywords indicated by the authors and the contents of the abstracts.
- 7. Summarise the required data. This phase involves the collection, organization and summary of the results through software "Bibliometrix" and "VOSviewer".
- 8. Document results and outcomes. In order to represent the results obtained, reference is made to some tabular and graphic products that document and summarise the relevant quantitative data.

The CA technique allows the grouping of heterogeneous units into several subsets, called clusters, which are as homogeneous and exhaustive as possible, allowing the achievement of a series of results (Fabbris, 1990) including typological research to identify groups of statistical units with distinct characteristics that highlight the physiognomy of the observed system, the definition of homogeneous classes (Green et al., 1967) and the generation of research hypotheses. CA is a purely empirical method of classification and as such is primarily an inductive technique. For analysis of this kind, the support of software for the management of bibliometric data is essential to process trend maps of research, that show the relationships between the keywords used in the selected documents and identifies clusters through the use of colours. In addition to this, the technique identifies the groups of keywords that most frequently coexist in publications through clustering models already implemented and validated.

### **Application and Quantitative Results**

In this research work, the processing of the results has been possible through the use of two open-source software for the management of bibliometric data: - *Bibliometrix*, a package for the statistical programming language R for quantitative research in scientometry and bibliometry (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).  VOSviewer, software that can be used to generate, visualize and analyse bibliometric networks (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The SLR process was developed with the support of Bibliometrix to perform a comprehensive analysis of the

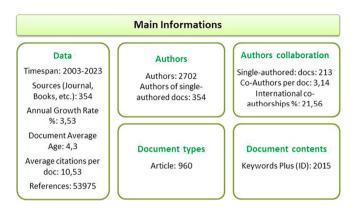


Figure 1. Description of main information and results

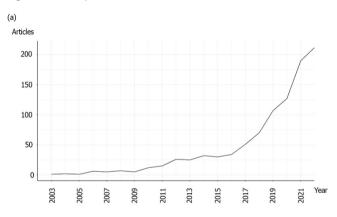
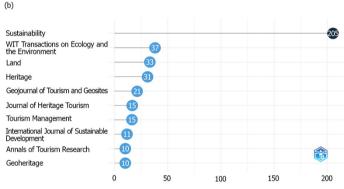


Figure 2. (a) Production Over Time; (b) Most Relevant Sources

mapping of scientific literature. The software allows the import of bibliographic data, which in this case were obtained from Scopus database, using the query string. The import of the file on the software has allowed to derive the main data reported in Figure. 1.

Through the numerous analyses that the tool allows to develop, it is observed that the production of scientific articles related to the combination "tourism" and "cultural heritage" has increased in recent years. As shown in Figure 2(a), in the period from 2003 to 2021, the discussion of this issue has seen a strong growth leading to an increase in the number of articles by more than 200%. Among the various sources, in particular, those that have proposed the most dissemination of the theme over time belong mainly to the European continent as the magazine *Sustainability* (Figure 2(b)).

An interesting aspect is the localization of the proposed contributions. The Three Fields Plot reported in Figure 3 shows through gradations of color the countries that have published on the theme, bringing out a production con-



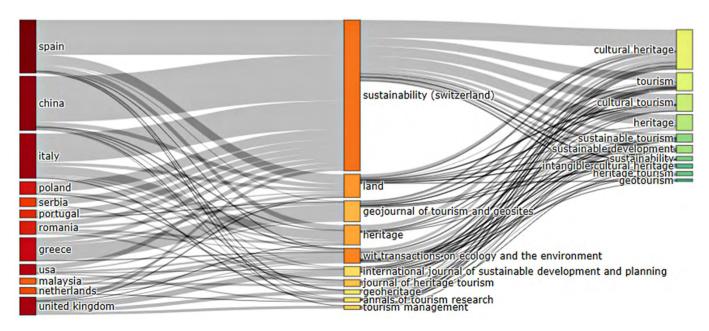


Figure 3. Three Fields Plot

centrated mainly in Europe and in some parts of Asia, first of all China. This type of representation allows you to visualize the main elements of three fields; in the case in question, the graph shows the connection between Countries (left), Sources (centre), and Keywords (right), confirming the analysis made with the previous elaborations.

A useful tool to intuitively view the specific issues addressed within the analysed documents is the so-called Word Cloud in Figure 4(a). It is a graphic representation of the most frequent words in a text, sorted by their visual impact. The Word Cloud is a great way to summarize information and immediately view key concepts through a particular use of text and graphics. In this case study, the keyword "cultural heritage" is dominant, followed by "heritage tourism" and "tourism development". The classification is also supported by the analysis of the frequency of words over time (Figure 4(b)); from the graph it is observed that the use of these keywords has grown in a clear way in recent years, demonstrating the trend of contributions to address these issues and confirming the primacy of the key concept "cultural heritage", followed by "heritage tourism" and "tourism development".

For the second phase of research, through the VOSviewer software, we proceeded with the application of the CA technique. Having identified the unit of analysis in the 4,997 keywords present in the selected literature, those were chosen that met the minimum threshold imposed of 20 occurrences, in number equal to 40. These keywords have been systematized in 4 clusters (Figure 5), associating a macro-thematic in each grouping:

To ensure immediate interpretation of the information provided by the software, maps have been created based on the data obtained. VOSviewer, in fact, allows you to link elements with networks created through co-authorship, co-oc-

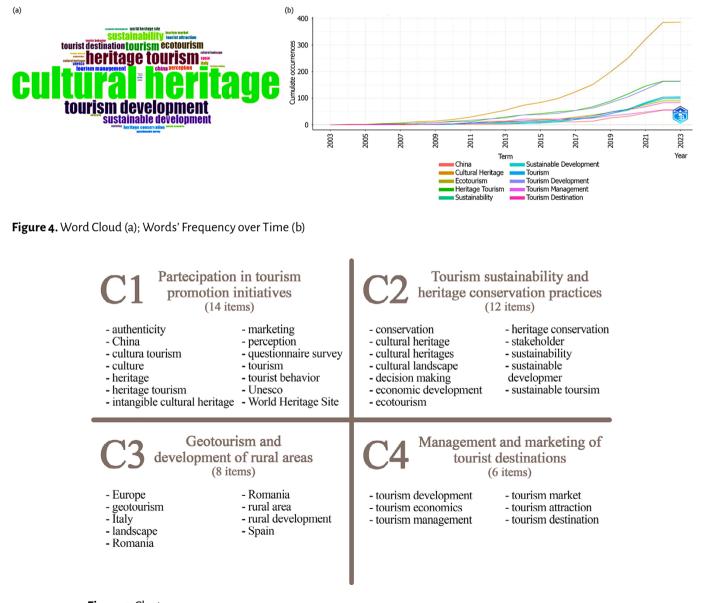


Figure 5. Clusters

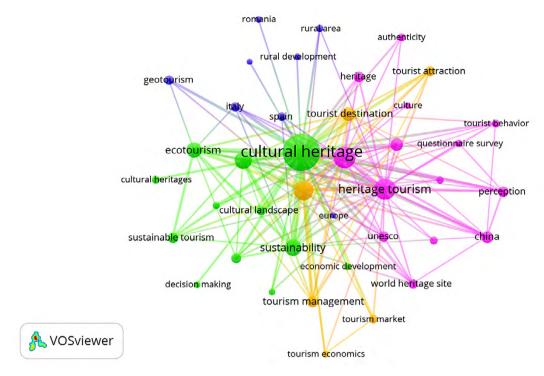


Figure 6. Network visualization

currence, citation, bibliographic coupling or co-citation links. In this work, the concept maps have been elaborated in order to summarize and outline the relationship between "tourism" and "cultural heritage". The first map, called *Network visualization* (Figure 6), is characterized by nodes representing the keywords linked together in order to define the mutual recurrence in small groups of publications. The size of a keyword and node is determined by the weight of the object, that is, it is proportional to its frequency of appearance in the analysed bibliographic database. The thickness of the connecting lines is proportional to the number of documents in which both keywords appear. By means of different colours are highlighted the 4 obtained clusters, are arranged in such a way as to bring back to the central part of the map the keywords that occur most frequently.

The map called *Density visualization* (Figure 7) aims to provide an overview of the main research areas investigated within the bibliometric network. Each keyword in the

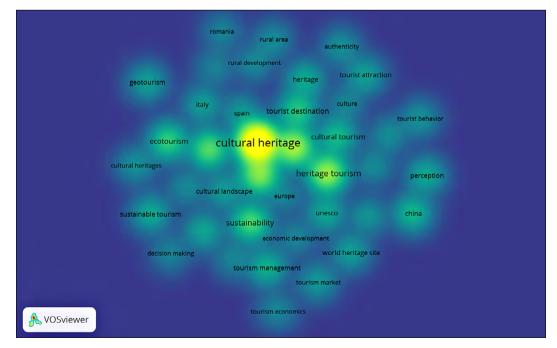


Figure 7. Density visualization

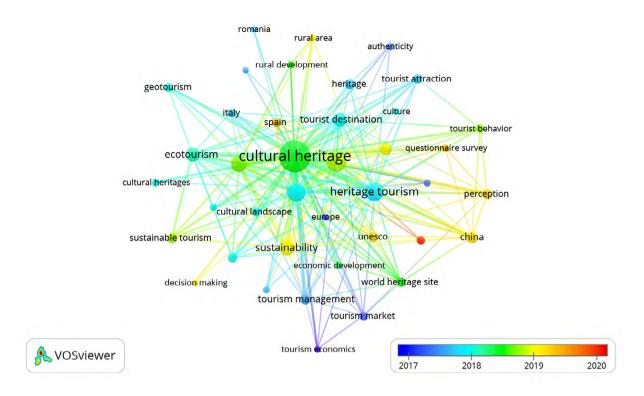


Figure 8. Overlay visualization

map has a colour that indicates the recurrence in the analysed contributions: the greater the use of that keyword, the more the colour of the point tends to yellow, conversely, tends to blue. The software also allows you to extrapolate other maps useful for research purposes such as *Overlay visualization* (Figure 8), which allows you to view the developments of the search in a defined time frame.

# **Qualitative Results**

Once the obtained clusters were identified and labelled, the authors considered it useful to accompany the quantitative results with a qualitative description of each one. Although the data obtained refer to the totality of the articles published in the period 2003-2023 on the Scopus database, the description process refers to a subgroup of the selected publications, that is those included in the period 2018-2023. This choice is justified by the desire to pay more attention to the most recent documents.

#### C1: Participation in tourism promotion initiatives

The tourism sector includes the enhancement of the existing heritage, with a focus on the components of the environment and cultural heritage that have a more marked value. As reported in Sarmento (2020), studying global tourism means thinking of it not only in terms of economy but also in terms of identity and differences in the representation of heritage, history, and the transformation of geographical spaces into significant places. Tourism is a global and complex phenomenon with a significant impact on space. Cultural tourism stands out among its many forms (Bitušíková, 2021; Kranioti et al., 2022; Krogmann et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), which aims to explore different cultures and civilizations; it encompasses a wide range of tourist interests (Rech & Migliorati, 2021). Cultural resources appear to be an undervalued asset, as they can be used to develop the local tourism sector, especially in cities seeking new development paths (Kwiatek-Soltys & Bajgier-Kowalska, 2019). Since the 1990s, cultural tourism has been supported by the desire to satisfy a greater knowledge of the culture, history, and heritage of the chosen destination (Boulhila et al., 2022). Cultural tourism provides cultural itineraries for visitors (Kaiser & Woller, 2021) to explore the cultural heritage of the host region (Al-Jaberi & Hasan, 2022). Cultural heritage and its various elements are an important factor in supporting tourism development processes (Rapidah et al., 2018; Szubert, 2021) and cultural itineraries have the potential to revitalize and develop the historical area in a sustainable way, thus stimulating cultural tourism (Al-Jaberi & Hasan, 2022). The use of tools such as ArcGIS Server e WebGIS for the realization of interactive maps allows the promotion of guide

platforms for tourists that allow them to locate places and tourist services in a quick and easy way (Mohamed, 2021). The development of virtual reality and augmented reality model visualization technologies allows to experience cultural heritage sites (Briciu et al., 2020; Han et al., 2021; Kwanghee et al., 2020; Walmsley & Kersten, 2020). The development of innovative educational and tourist activities makes it possible to define rural revitalization strategies, promote community resilience in heritage sites, strengthen local values, and encourage social and economic efficiency (Shen et al., 2022). Among the various forms of heritage, intangible heritage has become an important area of tourism development for many countries hosting such resources (Eichler, 2021; Maags, 2021; Qiu et al., 2019). Indeed, it can activate the in-depth experience of tourists for local culture, to increase the attraction and competitive advantage of national or regional tourism (Wu et al., 2022). Tourists have become increasingly interested in intangible cultural heritage (Leonardi & Unterpertinger, 2022). Authenticity is important in this type of tourism (Tian et al., 2020) as it greatly enriches the experience (Lu et al., 2022) and has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction (Zhang, H. et al., 2018). As important forms of intangible cultural heritage, activities such as sports events are becoming a potential catalyst for tourism (Zhang, T. et al., 2018); also, festivals are a viable source of tourism promotion as they provide recognition to different cultures and communities (Antohin, 2019; Naqvi et al., 2018; Quand et al., 2022; Shi et al., 2019). One of the recurring promotion initiatives in literature is that of place branding which can be defined as the process of creating the identity of a place. Cultural heritage is a unique tool for place branding activities for territories (Fierro & Aranburu, 2019; Radosavljevic & Culafic, 2019). Often visitors document their experience on social media platforms, thus contributing to the branding process of the event and the place making process, involving lesser-known heritage values. Place branding, through urban festivals, focused on local built heritage, can also reduce the increasing pressure on urban centres in historic-tourist cities affected by overtourism phenomena (Kádár & Klaniczay, 2022). The use of social networks through trans media storytelling actions strengthens the value of destinations and increases their online reputation (Campillo-Alhama & Martinez-Sala, 2019). The use of these new forms of communication has favoured new ways of using cultural products (Fernández & Alarcón, 2020; Hugentobles, 2022; Longhi-Heredia & Marcotte, 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of social networks enabled museum activities to maintain exchanges with the public, enrich the offer of services and strengthen the attractiveness of museums and cultural institutions (Palumbo, 2022). The use of software and technologies helps to define new promotional practices because they allow to build and provide agile experi-

ences and increase the dissemination of cultural heritage (Gomez-Oliva et al., 2019).

# C2: Tourism sustainability and heritage conservation practices

Sustainable management of cultural heritage tourism is becoming an important factor in the image of tourist destinations (Jurado-Rivas & Sánchez-Rivero, 2019; Kontiza et al., 2020; Weng et al., 2019). The concept of sustainability is growing and is becoming a dominant aspect in modern business (Palazzo et al., 2022). When it comes to sustainable tourism, three main criteria are laid down: economic, social and environmental criteria (Mayuzumi, 2022; Prevolšek et al., 2020). Sustainability is promoting economic growth that generates equitable wealth for all without harming the environment, becoming one of the objectives that serve as a starting point for many place branding strategies (Cristófol et al., 2021). It is necessary to ensure the sustainability of heritage sites and that the tourism they generate is revisited (Jelincic, 2021), containing current patterns of excessive tourism, such as mass tourism in historic centers (Bilotta et al., 2021), and the behavior of the tourists during visits which plays a central role in tourism activities (Cheng & Chen, 2022). Before the Covid-19 pandemic, mass tourism was the main driver of the unusual growth of tourist accommodation. The pandemic break can be seen as an opportunity to reset cultural heritage management policy and practice (Dastgerdi et al., 2021) because if not properly managed, it could lead to the destruction of the very resources on which it depends. Through the study of literature, different practices of tourist sustainability have emerged such as cycling tourism (Simeoni & De Crescenzo, 2018), ecotourism, the experiential tourism (Belliggiano, 2021) and slow tourism, a growing phenomenon especially in Italy where it is playing a key role in defining new sustainable tourism strategies for enhancing the landscape and cultural heritage, but also as an engine for the revitalization of the marginalized and internal areas of the country (Scandiffio, 2021). Among these, ecotourism stands out: it is based on the principles of protection of the natural environment and recognition of the original local culture in interaction with the environment (Üzümoğlu & Turkan, 2022). Ecotourism is increasingly accepted as a suitable alternative to supporting rural livelihoods (Kimengsi et al., 2019). This new form includes trips to destinations where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the main attractions (Mekhum & Torasa, 2020). Cultural heritage is also seen as a tool for the development of sustainable tourism. It can be a driving force for economic growth in cities and regions (Kostopoulou et al., 2021). The natural conditions of the places, the level of conservation of the urban system and its development trends, constitute the value and identity of these cities and may serve as a basis for the development of tourism, contribuing to its revitalization (Lakomy, 2021). As positives impacts, sustainable tourism generates jobs (Lukác et al., 2021), promotes local culture and products (Agustarini et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2018), and tries to preserve as much as possible the links with tradition (Kutin & Telban, 2021). Its development implies responsible management of the areas (Krajnović et al., 2021) that can benefit traditional rural activities, the environment and heritage but, if transformed into overtourism, it can harm and damage the natural landscape (Iannucci et al., 2022). Visitors can boost an economy, but the rapid growth of tourism often has negative effects on both the built heritage and the lives of local inhabitants (Zubiaga et al., 2019). The main factors influencing heritage conservation include the lack of proper management, the lack of funds and the involvement of stakeholders (Mekonnen et al., 2022). The question of how to maintain and manage cultural landscapes whose economic benefits are not assured has become a priority in science and practice (Zscheischler et al., 2019). Cultural heritage sites, in addition to being a tangible link with the history and culture of a country, actively contribute to the national economy by providing a basis on which to develop cultural tourism (Kasnesin et al., 2019). One of the main risks to heritage conservation is manmade and is associated with the lack of cultural identification of local society with cultural heritage (Prados-Peña et al., 2019). The conservation of heritage sites is considered a vital component of their management as they are irreplaceable resources for the tourism industry (Basu, 2020). Sustainable public policies for cultural heritage management are needed (Magio et al., 2021). Proposing conservation strategies for the reuse and development of areas underlines the importance of a management plan aimed at preserving the historical character of areas and their sustainable development (Zitouni-Petrogianni et al., 2022). Italian cities represent a delicate context, where the concerns related to tourist flows and resource consumption are amplified by the concentration of sites and points of interest in urban areas, while tourism remains vital for economic growth (Lerario, 2022). In addition to the human factor, cultural heritage is threatened by climate change. Understanding exposure and vulnerability is challenging and rarely makes the risk and resilience assessment practice (Arrighi et al., 2022). There is a need to define decision support tools that focus on management priorities in order to exploit historic conservation and adaptation actions that improve the continuity of heritage values and sites (Li et al., 2021). The degradation of ecosystems can change the perceived value of destinations for tourists. For this reason, it is necessary to have accurate information on future climate change conditions that affect the attributes of the territory, not only to be more effective in the early prevention of threats to be prioritized but also to deal with potential damage to the tourism economy more effi-

ciently (Lam-González, 2022). The preservation of cultural heritage must be supported by conservation guidelines, heritage site management plans and community involvement in order to achieve economic and social sustainability (Mekonnen et al., 2022).

### C3: Geotourism and development of rural areas

In recent years, especially after the pandemic from Covid-19, a new trend in travel has increasingly emerged. Tourists are now oriented towards domestic rather than external offers, rural rather than urban regions (Oltean & Gabor, 2021). Rural tourism is one of the activities that can help to prevent depopulation by promoting the landscape and cultural heritage, also useful for their development and improvement, so that the abandonment of the territories is slowed or even reversed to the benefit of the local population (López-Sanz et al., 2021). The inclusion of elements of the natural landscape in tourism determines the birth of geotourism (Pereira et al., 2019) which represents a powerful and new form of eco-tourism compatible and sustainable that has rapidly expanded worldwide in recent decades, being crucial for the enhancement of geoheritage especially in rural areas (Filocamo et al., 2020). According to Scarlett & Riede (2019), geoheritage cannot be easily separated from cultural values and heritage; for this reason, it is necessary to merge the aspects of the latter with those of cultural heritage. To develop environmentally friendly tourism activities, it is necessary to build on the natural resources of cultural heritage and biodiversity (Sadowski & Wojcieszak, 2019), by including aspects of geodiversity within urban geoturistic pathways (Pereira & Farias, 2020). Designing a nature trail through the landscape for geotourism is a proposal for a new tourist product alternative to the traditional coastal tourist product "sun and beach" (Beltrán-Yanes et al., 2020). The paths have scientific/educational, cultural/heritage, landscape, and tourist, just like other geosites (Helgadóttir & Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Other elements that form the basis for the development of geotourism are geoparks (Skibinski et al., 2021). Tourism management is a great way to achieve sustainable development in rural areas and improve the quality of life of the resident population while respecting their natural and cultural heritage (Pérez-Calderón et al., 2022). Promoting geosite appreciation within a geotouristic framework can inspire a sense of nationalistic pride, thus creating an economic incentive for countries actively involved in geoheritage research and documentation (Rassios & Grieco, 2021). This sense of nationalistic pride can arouse in the original tourist of these sites a motivation that drives him to travel for the knowledge of the history of his territory as well as that of his family. For this reason, the theme of the so-called "Roots Tourism", although not present within the items of this cluster, emerges as a new trend, contributing not only to limiting the depopulation of rural areas but also to diversifying and seasonally adjusting the local tourist offer. According to Meini et al. (2018), the future challenges of geotourism concern the ability to recompose nature and culture in an interpretative unit, both theoretically and operationally, and the objective is to achieve an integrated tourist offer focused on the relationship between man and the environment in which the signs of territorialisation processes are expressed through economic vocations, traditional production chains, cultural values, and territorial identities. It is necessary that tourism planning and marketing maintain the integrity of the landscape avoiding the marginalization of local communities, so as to reduce cultural tensions between tourism and the landscape (Wang & Marafa, 2021).

#### C4: Management and marketing of tourist destinations

It is crucial to assess how tourists can be better understood and assisted through planning and marketing to attract more visitors (Sinha & Pratt, 2021). Marketing communication is vital for building a tourism brand (Li & Mahamood, 2022). To do this correctly it is essential to know first of all the opinions of the host communities on the impact of tourism (Gómez, 2019). Understanding the residents' points of view can help tourism managers and planners in

### Discussion

The systematic review of the literature has made it possible to show an overview of the main aspects related to the tourist enhancement of cultural heritage discussed on the international scene, allowing to observe the relationship between "tourism" and "cultural heritage" and its temporal evolution. The recent increase in the number of contributions published shows that this issue is attracting considerable and growing interest. In particular, the study made it possible to define a qualitative framework that could better define the themes and the contents of each cluster obtained. In the process of cataloguing the selected contributions, several articles were found to be linked to more than one cluster, including integrated information related to several themes. From a quantitative point of view, it has been observed that the international studies on the subject mainly concern Countries of Europe and Asia, thanks also to the variety that characterizes them in terms of cultural heritage, making them attractive and diversified destinations. The tourism sector has been affected by a transformation process due to several factors, first of all the development of the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to the definition of new needs of consumers in the sector and the emergence of new regional tourist markets. Nowadays, the concept of historical places and their importance emerges as they enjoy a heritage characterized by cultural and economic values, able to support the local economy through the adoption

order to minimize the potential negative impact and thus gain their support. It is also important to identify tourist landscape attractors so that they can make the most of their potential (Ridley, 2020; Zonouz et al., 2018). Useful activities for the purpose of retrieving feedback related to the tourist experience are conducting interviews or administering questionnaires to visitors to obtain opinions on management needs and development (Kaltenborn, 2019). The action of stakeholders is fundamental to implementing marketing initiatives also for those territories that although they have a significant natural and cultural heritage, are not necessarily tourist destinations. However, they can become so if supported by the active participation of local actors oriented to the development of the area (Beltramo, 2021). The involvement of stakeholders is one of the fundamental principles in the sustainable development of tourism (Rakitovac et al., 2021). Understanding the different approaches to development and the inclusion of the public in the process can significantly increase the sustainability of future tourism development (Sarenac et al., 2019). The participation of local communities allows them not only to be able to express their opinions but also to participate concretely in the processes of planning and managing heritage conservation (Beal et al., 2019).

of a winning strategy of tourism marketing. Academic research also establishes the need and importance of community participation in decision-making, trying to understand the perspectives and motivations of people to participate in collaborative governance. Policy-making suffers from a lack of knowledge on how to effectively motivate and engage communities in heritage tourism management (Chauhan, 2022). Through the extrapolation of clusters, it has been possible to observe how aspects such as "sustainable tourism" or "cultural tourism", are emerging concepts in recent contributions. In this regard, the research found the absence of keywords related to the recent meaning called "Roots Tourism" which can contributes to diversifying and seasonally adjusting the local tourist offer. It is tourism generated by migrants who go on holiday to their country of origin, often after having been away for a long time, or by their descendants who want to visit and know the land of origin of their family (De Marchi & Mingotto, 2016). It is also known as tourism of the origins and return (Ferrari & Nicotera, 2021). The goal of this trend is to research one's own identity heritage, re-establishing a connection with the history of one's family. With this spirit, the Italian communities abroad can be involved in a strategy that has as its main objective to reverse the decline of the villages, actively supporting the revival not only of tourism but also of the culture and economy of our country. The new tourist phenomena in peripheral rural areas are destined to become important drivers of change because they can favour a "proactive conservation of the landscape" in substitution of the abandonment due to the coevolution between transformation, active citizenship, and tourism economy (Salvatore et al., 2018). The sustainable cultural tourism, placing cultural heritage and local communities at the centre of decision-making processes, offers the possibility of a new perspective that ensures that the results benefit both the heritage and the local population. From the results achieved, therefore, you can see how the way of tourism is changing, being more attentive to climate issues and the needs of users. If in the World Heritage Sites and the most important areas the problem of overtourism emerges, in the small rural areas, the problem is to search for forms of tourism that can attract more tour-

ists, thus limiting the process of depopulation increasingly marked. Proposing the "Roots Tourism" is an innovative strategy that takes very interesting aspects to deepen in order to promote the image of rural areas. In addition to this, another aspect to be explored concerns the participation of communities. Although this theme is present in the selected literature, it is mainly addressed as a theoretical line and with little concrete evidence. Reference is made to future studies that may propose new forms of participation useful to encourage the local communities to choose strategies advantageous both to tourists and residents. The deepening of these two themes can also encourage the maturation of the sense of place. User involvement in local tourism development strategies can increase attachment to a place and positively influence the behaviour of tourists and residents.

### Conclusion

The results obtained appear to be relevant for research into cultural tourism. However, some limitations of the adopted review process can be found in the criteria for inclusion/exclusion of contributions which are very limiting. In fact, widening the selected literature would allow to define more general clusters. Future research developments are expected to deepen the identified clusters, including through collaboration with other European universities. In particular, the choice was guided by the results of the cluster analysis that identify Italy, Spain and Romania as emerging countries. Therefore, for this purpose is being defined the formalization of an agreement between the authors' Department (Italy) and the Universidade de A Coruña (Spain) in order to deep the clusters emerged from the process of selection of the literature.

As regards the first cluster, cultural tourism is recognized as the main form of tourism, that allows to underline a relationship between tourism and cultural heritage currently promoted also thanks to the use of software that allow to realize interactive maps able to make easier and interesting the exploration of the heritage. Among the existing forms of heritage, the intangible type stands out, which constitutes a competitive advantage especially of national and regional tourism. Initiatives of place branding can favor the construction of the identity of a place, aspect that makes participates also the tourists through the use of the social networks. The development of innovative tourism activities therefore allows us to define revitalization strategies, especially in rural areas, thus promoting the resilience of communities.

The second cluster highlights the need to ensure the sustainability of heritage sites by containing the phenomenon of overtourism. In addition to the human factor, cultural heritage is threatened by natural disasters, invasive interventions and climate change. For this reason, it is necessary to have accurate information on future climate change conditions that affect the attributes of the territory at local level, not only to be more effective in the early prevention of threats to be prioritized, but also to deal with potential damage to the tourism economy more efficiently.

The third cluster, on the other hand, focuses on the practice of geotourism, which allows to include elements of the natural landscape in tourism, and the development of rural areas, highlighting the absence of forms of tourism that can motivate the original tourist of rural areas to know their own history.

The last cluster, finally, provide information on how to manage and promote tourist destinations, underlining the necessary active participation of local actors oriented to the development of the area.

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