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Alen Šabanović

CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION OF CULTURE AND EMERGENCE OF CULTURAL TOURISM

Abstract

The paper explores how the understanding of culture evolved through history and how this evolution led to the theoretical and practical development of cultural tourism as a selective tourist form. First part of the paper discusses etymological and conceptual evolution of culture, originally derived from Latin terms meaning "cultivation of the land." Over time, this concept expanded metaphorically to include the "cultivation of the mind and spirit." During the Enlightenment, culture was perceived as a rational and civilizing force that distinguished humanity from nature. However, the Romantic period reversed this rationalist approach by elevating imagination, creativity, and emotion as higher forms of human expression. Later, with industrialization and mass society, culture became commodified, a process that led to the rise of mass culture and eventually the cultural industries that shape much of modern tourism. Building on this theoretical foundation, the paper explores interdependency between culture and tourism, where tourism is discussed as a cultural act in itself, where travelers engage with different social norms, artistic expressions, and ways of life through their journeys. This part is followed by discussion on definitions of cultural tourism, where differences between conceptual and technical definitions are presented, pointing to importance of postmodern understanding of tourism as an experiential and interpretive process. Conclusion of the paper argues that cultural tourism aligns with postmodern sensibilities that privilege individuality, authenticity, and experiential engagement, suggesting a dynamic arena in which encounters with other cultures may contribute to ongoing processes of exchange and identity formation.

Keywords: *Culture; Raymond Williams; Tourism; Cultural Tourism; Cultural Industries.*

KONCEPTUALNA EVOLUCIJA KULTURE I POJAVA KULTURNOG TURIZMA

Sažetak

Rad istražuje kako se razumijevanje kulture razvijalo kroz historiju i kako je ta evolucija dovela do teorijskog i praktičnog razvoja kulturnog turizma kao selektivne turističke forme. Prvi dio rada razmatra etimološko i konceptualno uređenje kulture, prvobitno izvedene iz latinskih termina koji upućuju na "obrađivanje zemlje". Vremenom se ovaj koncept metaforički proširio i uključio "obrađivanje uma i duha". Tokom prosvjetiteljstva, kultura se doživljavala kao racionalna i civilizacijska sila koja razlikuje čovječanstvo od prirode. Međutim, romantičarski period je preokrenuo ovaj racionalistički pristup uzdižući maštu, kreativnost i emocije kao više oblike ljudskog izražavanja. Kasnije, sa industrijalizacijom i masovnim društvom, kultura je postala komodificirana, proces koji je doveo do uspona masovne kulture te posljedično i kulturnih industrija koje oblikuju veliki dio modernog turizma. Nadovezujući se na ovu teorijsku osnovu, rad istražuje međuzavisnost kulture i turizma, gdje se turizam razmatra kao kulturni čin sam po sebi, gdje se putnici kroz svoja putovanja upoznaju sa različitim društvenim normama, umjetničkim izrazima i načinima života. Nakon ovog dijela slijedi diskusija o definicijama kulturnog turizma, gdje su predstavljene razlike između konceptualnih i tehničkih definicija, ukazujući na važnost postmodernističkog razumijevanja turizma kao iskustvenog i interpretativnog procesa. Zaključak rada tvrdi da se kulturni turizam poklapa sa postmodernističkim senzibilitetom koji privileguje individualnost, autentičnost i iskustveni angažman, sugerirajući dinamičnu arenu u kojoj susreti sa drugim kulturama mogu doprinijeti tekućim procesima razmjene i formiranja identiteta.

Ključne riječi: *Kultura; Raymond Williams; Turizam; Kulturni turizam; Kulturne industrije;*

INTRODUCTION

Although cultural tourism as a specifically recognized selective form of tourism exists for only a few decades, as a practical activity, its existence is linked to a much earlier period, the 17th century, when such activities manifested themselves in the so-called "Grand Tour". Being focused on culturally related tourism resources and tourist motivation based on cultural differences and new experiences, cultural tourism is inseparable from the concept of culture. This concept, which evolved from cultivation of the land towards culture as a way of living, was evasive in its definition because culture as a phenomenon is elusive and often dependent on specific circumstances. The meaning of the term itself always depended on social, historical, philosophical and scientific contexts. In the process of defining a culture, modern tradition sought to define and explain phenomenon and to measure it strictly according to scientific objectivity, however, the theoretical tendencies of the present day are increasingly marked by abandoning that intention. Therefore, it is hard to single out culture as a separate area in the modern world because it is an integral part of the social and individual life. Another reason is that it is difficult to establish objective and "lens-free" consideration of culture, because every piece of human creation, intellectual or artistic, is conditioned by the context in which it arises, which is one of the principal determinants of cultural studies. They stand for the idea that culture can be found everywhere and in every place. Consequently, every effort to restrict that culture is not only problematic but also unnecessary. For cultural studies, culture is a dynamic, heterogeneous variable and does not function as an isolated phenomenon or in an isolated area. It is dependent on the dynamics of social, psychological, political and economic everyday life. Therefore, in an effort to discuss theoretical determinants of cultural tourism, as a culturally dependent tourism form, the main part of this text will start with the etymological and conceptual meaning of culture.

Etymological and Conceptual Meaning of Culture

One of the most frequent meanings of the term *culture* can be found in different sources, but the explanations often point to several of its Latin word roots: "cultus", "colere", which denote the cultivation of the earth, emphasizing that the semantics of the word we use today began as part of agriculture-oriented societies (Ritter, 1971, as cited in Petrović, 2005: 9). In time, the term "culture" evolved and gained a metaphorical sense, from the cultivation of the earth, to cultivation of the spirit (Niedermann, 1941, as cited in Petrović, 2005: 9), and this stage of the term's evolution was the starting point for the meaning of "culture", enthroned in the Romanticist period. However, prior to Romanticism, the concept of culture was heavily contrasted to the concept of nature in the Age of Enlightenment: "The enlighteners understood culture as all the achievements that sought to rationally organize human and social life, a complex system consisting of ideas, techniques and social institutions. Culture was the product of human hands and mind, what sets man apart from nature, which in a sense defies it as proof of human superiority" (Đorđević, 2009: 25).

Romanticism brought upon a revision of Enlightenment's concept of culture. The faith was put in the imaginative and creative, art, poetry, and music. They represented the "salvation" from man's alienation of the industrial era and the Enlightenment's dominant rational worldview. In essence, Romanticism was an "attack" at the rationality and its derivative products, the science and technology. The place of rational educated man of Enlightenment was taken by an artist, a genius and the significance of art was raised to incredible heights.

The industrialization produced a different society, mass society, with corresponding cultural needs and habits, which were in sharp contrast with the Romanticist tradition. Because of that,

the critique was all encompassing and radical. New urban society was being formed in parallel with secularization tendencies and development of technologies and sciences, where this newly formed mass society served as labor in production processes. The idea of mass society back then, was recognized as a threat to the idealist culture of Romanticism. The culture that was developing within this new society introduced new notions and processes which were alien to the previous tradition. Those were commercialization and industrialization of culture. "Along with the concept of mass society the concept of mass culture also came about, which marks a new tendency towards commercialization and industrialization of culture whose goal is the production of profit" (Đorđević, 2009: 29). New technological innovations, particularly photography, film and radio led to mass reproductions in the field of culture. The emergence of photography left a major impact on visual arts before the 20th century. The primary goal of visual arts up to that point, was to try to recreate reality as closely as possible, and with the introduction of photographic invention, the artists turned to a completely opposite philosophy, starting with Cubism and Pablo Picasso. "'Reproducible reality' was left to photography, while visual arts took a quantum leap in a new Cubist direction. Cubism rescued art from obsolescence and re-established its authority to represent reality in a way that photography could not" (Appignanesi & Garratt, 1997: 18). This tendency to move toward increasingly abstract forms eventually culminates in the later postmodern period of the late 20th century.

In England (where Cultural Studies would later emerge), critique of mass culture was most widespread. This was particularly evident during the early industrialization period, as the English critic, Matthew Arnold states in "Culture and Anarchy": "The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere" (Arnold, 1869: 70).

In Arnold's concept, the culture was exalted and it functioned as a means of moral improvement. His concept was also a part of cultural policy of the time. In effect, it meant to "restore" society to the previous approach to culture. His concept essentially included a division, between high and low culture, meaning that culture is a privilege. Relying on such notions, Arnold was proposing a plan of educational reforms which was supposed to restore the values of "real" culture, with the goal of widespread cultural recovery and exit from the state of "anarchy".

Arnold's definition of culture could be interpreted as the totality of a way of life, but it was heavily class oriented, elevating the cultural norms of higher classes and discrediting any other cultural notions, needs and habits. In contrast, later notions of culture present far more appropriate concepts when the field of tourism is considered. Definition framework of Raymond Williams for example, enables us to expand the meaning of culture itself, making it possible for culture to be applied in many different fields, including tourism. Being one of the founders of cultural studies, Williams established what today is considered a "classical definition" of culture. It comes from his work in 1961, where the author presents three major categories in defining culture:

1. "… an 'ideal' definition which attempts to abstract the process it describes from its detailed embodiment and shaping by particular societies- regarding man's ideal

development as something separate from and even opposed to his 'animal nature' or the satisfaction of material needs- seems to be unacceptable" (Williams, 1961: 57).

2. "… culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. The analysis of culture from such a definition, is the activity of criticism, by which the nature of the thought and experience, the details of the language, form and convention in which these are active, are described and valued" (Ibid).

3. "… where culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture. Such analysis will include… historical criticism… in which intellectual and imaginative works are analyzed in relation to particular traditions and societies, but will also include analysis of elements in the way of life that to followers of the other definitions are not 'culture' at all…" (Ibid).

Williams's third definition, social definition of culture, allows for understanding of culture unbound by class division and canon in the field of art. It encompasses not only material and spiritual products of society but also their behavioral norms, formed by their specific cultural codes. The richness in variety of cultural components this definition possesses makes it the most relevant for distinguishing cultural tourism from other selective tourism forms.

An Interdependency between Tourism and Culture

The link between tourism and culture has been developing since the very beginnings of leaving permanent places of residence. Although tourism as we know it today was not established more widely until the emergence of the *Grand Tour* in the modern age, the contact between cultures was present long before and was often motivated by interest in religion, heritage and culture, which today can be classified among types of cultural tourism. In essence, the "culture" was always one of the principal tourism products and attractions, attraction to foreign visitors with various heritage forms and cultural events. Since all basic definitions of tourism are based primarily on traveling, every tourist trip must involve certain cultural elements, because the tourist is being displaced from one cultural context to another and it is this cultural difference that drives the actual tourism process. In this regard, a certain tourist visits, can be considered a manifestation of cultural tourism, although the primary motivation of tourists and/or interests was not specifically directed towards cultural. Concerning this phenomenon, several authors (Jeličnić, 2008; Richards, 2003; Hughes, 1996) point out the necessity to make distinction between certain levels and types of motivation, which show the difference between various levels of exposure to culture as a result of difference in tourist motivations.

A good example of how much tourism in general is defined by culture (despite numerous other selective tourism forms), can be noted from Keillor's understanding of the relationship between traveling and tourism in America: "We don't need to think about cultural tourism because in reality other type of tourism does not exist. That is the essence of tourism … People do not come to America because of our airports, people do not come to America because of our hotels or possibilities of recreation … They come because of our culture: high culture, low culture, middle culture, left, right, real or imagined – they come to see America" (Keillor, 2008, as cited in Jelinčić, 2008: 45).

Although this statement might be considered limiting in a manner, since there are indeed many other types of selective tourism, the statement Keillor made serves as a reminder to our previous culture definition of choice, the Williams social definition. It conceptualizes culture as a *way of life*, where cultural elements are not limited to artistic expressions in service of higher social classes, but extend beyond, encompassing ordinary people's behavior and values. These are the elements that are quite frequent in majority of tourist visits and often come to surface during their interactions with individuals in various culturally foreign locations. These interactions can be motivated by all kinds of tourist needs and goals, ranging from assistance of tourist agency employees, commercial exchange and various market places, to private social interactions with culturally foreign individuals. Williams definition, as well as Keillor's statement, both serve as indicators that the basis of cultural tourism is in learning and experiencing different, not to say "alien", and that in cultural tourism, there is little to no place for class or identity discrimination. Culture is not considered privileged, as was the case in notions of Arnold and discontinued with Williams.

Considering how the *Grand Tour* as early form of contemporary tourism is generally defined as *educational travel*, Williams's definition of culture, where culture is a description of a particular way of life (which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior), corresponds to *Grand* Tour in lifestyle and education aspects. Also, the conceptual definitions of cultural tourism, such as the one from Yvette Reisinger (1994: 24) where cultural tourism is defined as: "tourism of specific interest which is based on a search for participation in new and important cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, emotional, intellectual or psychological", corresponds with Williams's definition of culture in terms of what *tourism* demands from culture as a product.

Although the culture and tourism have been tied in practice for a long time, in theory, they have been treated as separate fields until the 20th century. How barriers between culture and tourism were abolished, (Urry, 1995: 122) describes in "Consuming Places", by recognizing two parallel culturisation processes:

1. Culturisation of society
   implies the process of *low* and *high* culture convergence, bonding of previously separated social and cultural spheres, increased mobility and opportunity of contact between distinct cultures and contemporary *economy of signs* (Ibid).

2. Culturisation of tourist practices
   with development of *culture* as a term and concept, tourism was no longer limited to material heritage *consumption*, but dealt with economy of intangible heritage, popular culture and signs which are increasingly circulated by cultural industries (Ibid).

Parallel to these two culturisation processes, the culture itself has changed compared to the 20th century: "Popular music, styles of dress, new developments in film, TV and theatre have been in part structured by a strong opposition to authority and especially to the authority of 'age'. It was an undoubted consequence of the political and cultural changes in the 1960s and 1970s that personal identity and individual self-assertion became highly valued goals of human experience in the West" (Ibid).

During this period, understanding of relations between culture and tourism changed because the understanding of cultural products and production changed as well, whereby culture itself could now also be understood and treated as a product. This situation created specific areas of demand in tourism, which continue to develop in order to satisfy tourist needs for cultural meaning and authenticity of experience, creating a certain cultural tourist lifestyle where

tourism as such could also be considered as a culture. One could argue that, the way tourism went, and goes through such intense culturisation processes, it is becoming more and more difficult to separate the concepts of tourism and culture, where cultural tourism as a distinct form comes into question itself.

Cultural Tourism

People have been visiting places outside their place of residence since ancient times and regardless of their motivation, it is certain they came into contact with different and various cultures during their travels. These practices however, cannot be regarded as tourism we know today. From the Renaissance to the 17th century, aristocracy accumulated a vast number of collections of various objects, of historical and cultural importance. During the modern age, the need for travel was mostly developed within aristocratic circles, which were able to fund such practices and continue to improve their collections. "The museum as we know it today emerged with the opening of these collections to the public in the 18th century. They became public, which also meant, they were now financially supported by the state" (Gob & Drouguet, 2007: 28).

With the development of the museums, especially in Europe, more people became motivated to travel and the museum became the central interest of the traveler. Until the 19th century, these travels, (which now, having established precise motivation, can be regarded as tourism), were still limited to the upper classes of society. However, as the industrialization process took hold across the world, it produced many changes in the social sphere as well as emergence of mass tourism. "In fact, the history of mass tourism began in 1851 when Thomas Cook led a mass of tourists to the Great Exhibition in London" (Naumov & Green, 2015: 1).

Industrial societies created a clear division between the work and leisure time, paid holidays emerged, spending power of the working class increased, making travel accessible to a wider circle of people. The use of holidays for tourist purposes was also made possible by advances in transport infrastructure. These kinds of holidays were mostly related to recreational activities, targeting mostly summer and winter periods. Since "recreational activities" cover a rather wide area of possible interest, depending on the personal interest of the tourist, we cannot say there were no cases of cultural tourism at the time. Before the WWI, the motivation for tourist travels was mainly cultural attractions, however, cultural tourism as a selective branch of tourism in general, was not yet developed. Therefore, the exact beginnings of cultural tourism practices are very difficult to pinpoint, since "almost every travel can be characterized as cultural because the traveler will intentionally or not, meet the "other" culture he comes in contact with (Jelinčić, 2008).

Cultural tourism in its academic sense emerged in the last part of the 20th century, mainly due to activities and educational efforts of international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe. As a tourist practice, it was a new, selective form of tourism, which today we call cultural tourism or tourism of cultural heritage. The emergence of cultural heritage is directly related to the change in the concept of culture, which was discussed in the chapter before. Following the expansion of the concept of culture with the development of Cultural Studies, the wider concept started to be recognized in the economic sphere as a business potential. This is also the time when the culture started to be more present in the market. Reasons behind this could mainly lie with the development of popular culture and its recognition as an economic potential. Another reason for culture moving to a more market-oriented sphere is a forced change in financial models. Highly developed capitalist societies created a highly competitive environment, where old models of financing and marketing were

not sufficient. This was a particular problem for cultural institutions, who as, often the bearers of national identity, enjoyed a steady and continuous support from the state. Cultural and Creative industries of today, which provide a significant part of cultural tourism offerings, present the most relevant example of culture in the market. Tourists not only experience a variety of cultural symbols on their trips, but the meanings and associations of travel are increasingly being created and spread by the cultural industries (Richards, 2003). As such, these industries do not only diffuse the effects of cultural tourism, but also present a major part of national economies income, such is the case in China. Then, the ever-increasing education level of the travelers, increased income and the one-sidedness of the tourism offerings in the 80s created a new type of traveler: "postmodern tourist". "Experience, novelty, activity and education are basic ingredients of the travel which that type of tourist requires" (Jelinčić, 2008: 53).

Postmodern tendencies in general encouraged the promotion of diversity and distinctiveness so it is not surprising that tourism started to develop into various branches of particular interests and specialized forms. It was after all, not only the response to postmodern society, but also a market response, trying to respond to demand, and tourism sector was one of the most capable to answer. Considering how culture already lost its full financial support from the state, tourism as an economic sector offered a solution, expanding its offer into specialized branches such as cultural tourism, congress tourism, health tourism, sport, religious, and rural tourism. "These changes in the fields of culture and the economy also affected the academic research, and in the 80s of the 20th century, began the academic research on the topic of cultural tourism, in order to use the cultural resources optimally in the tourism and to ensure the quality of tourist offerings, but also the protection, and preservation of material and spiritual culture as an identity expression of receptive community" (Jelinčić, 2008: 53-54).

Cultural tourism as a practice undoubtedly emerged before its contemporary economic form. It came about not as a new practice but as a much more categorized and refined tourism branch, able to satisfy even *niche* tourist interests. Being specific in its answer to wide spectrum of specific tourist demands, it caught increasing attention from economists, local governments and policy makers. Statistical data also confirms such trends, as World Tourism Organisation claimed that cultural tourism made up 37% of the global market at the turn of the century, and predicted it would grow by 15% annually. However, these specific figures, while frequently cited in market studies, are rarely supported by solid, empirical evidence (Richards, 2003). According to the OECD (2009), cultural tourism accounted for around 40% of all international tourism, or 360 million arrivals in 2007. Although it is often difficult to distinguish these 'culturally motivated tourists' from other travellers because of the growing tendency towards mixed holiday motives, they are particularly desirable for destinations seeking to attract 'high quality' tourism and high value tourists" (Richards & Munsters, 2010: 1).

Despite the difficulty in classification, Richards and Munsters overlook the fact that all forms of tourism that involve interaction with culture are considered forms of cultural tourism. The issue the authors point out relates solely to the primary motivation for travel, a criterion already used in various cultural tourism and general tourism typologies. Nevertheless, the most basic description of this kind of tourism would be, that it is a type of tourism where the interest and demand for objects and contents of cultural character prevails over others. Concerning the definition of cultural tourism, most authors agree that definition heavily depends on the standpoint adopted. Thus, cultural tourism could be viewed from "organizational, economic, consumer standpoint, cultural, educational and marketing perspective" (Đukić-Dojčinović, 2005: 15).

Regardless of the perspective, two of the most common types of cultural tourism definitions, which are often cited in papers on this topic, are categorized as the conceptual or technical definitions. There is no however, one unique universal definition because the experts who are dealing with cultural tourism, take into account their own specific focus of research, as is the case with individuals who work in practice. There are several terms in fact, which are used to signify this type of tourism. "Some call it cultural tourism, some tourism of heritage, some cultural heritage tourism. Everyone, however, shares the same responsibility: introducing tourists to what makes a particular city, region or country different and interesting, whether it is art, culture, history or altogether" (Jelinčić, 2008: 41, 42). One of the reasons for this state in defining of cultural tourism lies in the complexity of the term "culture". "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought (Williams, 1976: 76-77).

Yvette Reisinger offers one of the more conceptually oriented definitions, where CT is "a tourism of specific interest which is based on a search for participation in new and important cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, emotional, intellectual or psychological." (Reisinger, 1994: 24) In contrast to this conceptual definition, ATLAS Research Project offered a technical definition, which clearly lacks emphasis on the learning process and experience. The definition states that "Cultural Tourism represents all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and CM, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence" (Richards, 1996: 24). These two definitions have distinct differences. The technical definition is more oriented toward and useful in quantitative research, where tourist is viewed as a consumer of cultural attractions, particularly heritage sites, while conceptual focuses on process of learning and acquiring information for satisfaction of cultural needs, being more suitable for basis of qualitative research.

These two however serve as foundational model in defining the cultural tourism and most definitions in the literature can be assigned to one of two aforementioned categories. Considering the socio-economic context of postmodern era in which cultural tourism emerged and cultural tourist profile developed, it seems that attempting to impose a fixed, rigid definition may prove counterproductive. Nevertheless, governments responsible for cultural policies and management of tourism industry, requires a definition in order to provide their contribution to further development and ensure more efficient use of cultural-tourist resources. Regardless of the approach in definition and standpoint of interest, it is safe to assume that in the present day, interests and motivations play a large role in studies and management of cultural tourism, and that one of the conceptual definitions could prove the most applicable in most cases.

CONCLUSION

Cultural tourism, although institutionally and academically recognized only in recent decades, reveals a much deeper historical continuity rooted in early forms of travel motivated by learning and cultural experience, such as the Grand Tour. The development of this tourism form reflects broader transformations in the understanding of culture itself, from its Enlightenment rationalist framing, through Romanticist idealization of art and creativity, to the inclusive and dynamic concept proposed by cultural studies, which positions culture as a way of life inseparable from everyday practices. This conceptual evolution established the foundation for understanding tourism as a cultural act, a process of encounter, learning, and identity negotiation.

As modern societies entered the post-industrial and post-modern phases, the interdependency between culture and tourism intensified, which resulted in the culturisation of both social life and tourist practice. Culture became both the content and the context of travel, while tourism evolved into one of the most visible modes of cultural production and consumption. Consequently, attempts to rigidly define cultural tourism seems challenging, the concept itself resists finalization, shaped as it is by fluid social, economic, and ideological processes.
In this sense, cultural tourism today may be viewed less as a distinct category and more as a dynamic field where culture and travel continuously intersect. It represents not only a significant segment of the global tourism market but also a meaningful practice through which individuals and societies negotiate authenticity, difference, and belonging in a globalized world.

ZAKLJUČAK

Kulturni turizam, iako institucionalno i akademski priznat tek u posljednjim decenijama, otkriva mnogo dublji historijski kontinuitet ukorijenjen u ranim oblicima putovanja motiviranih učenjem i kulturnim iskustvom poput Grand Tour-a. Razvoj ovog turističkog oblika odražava šire transformacije u razumijevanju same kulture, od njenog prosvjetiteljskog racionalističkog uokviravanja, preko romantičarske idealizacije umjetnosti i kreativnosti, do inkluzivnog i dinamičnog koncepta koji predlažu kulturalne studije, a koji kulturu pozicionira kao način života neodvojivu od svakodnevnih praksi. Ova konceptualna evolucija postavila je temelje za razumijevanje turizma kao kulturnog čina, procesa susreta, učenja i pregovaranja o identitetu. Kako su moderna društva ulazila u postindustrijsku i postmodernu fazu, međuzavisnost kulture i turizma se intenzivirala, što je rezultiralo kulturalizacijom i društvenog života i turističke prakse. Kultura je postala i sadržaj i kontekst putovanja, dok se turizam razvio u jedan od najvidljivijih načina kulturne proizvodnje i potrošnje. Posljedično, pokušaji krutog definiranja kulturnog turizma čine se izazovnim. Sam koncept se opire finalizaciji, oblikovan fluidnim društvenim, ekonomskim i ideološkim procesima.
U tom smislu, kulturni turizam danas se može posmatrati manje kao zasebna kategorija, a više kao dinamično polje gdje se kulture i putovanja kontinuirano prepliću. On predstavlja ne samo značajan segment globalnog turističkog tržišta, već i smislenu praksu kroz koju pojedinci i društva pregovaraju o autentičnosti, različitosti i pripadnosti u globaliziranom svijetu.

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