



CULTURAL TOURISM: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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- **Abstract** *What is cultural tourism? It's not an easy question, because the word culture is quite difficult to define it. A first difference! Culture is considered a part of civilization in the English and French spaces, while in the German space culture is considered distinct from civilization. Germans consider culture as the spiritual creation of a people, and civilization as the material creation of a people. This distinction was taken over in the countries of central and eastern Europe. According to World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism includes "movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages." Some researchers prefer the concept of heritage tourism instead of rural tourism.*

• **Introduction**

- The term "tourism" comes from the group of words "tour", "to tour" or "to make a tour", created in the 1700s in England. These words were created to express, starting from that period, the action of traveling, of traveling within Europe, especially in France and Italy. The words were found especially in France, where the word "tour" (journey, walk) comes from, and their origin is in Greece, where this term began, namely the word "tornos".
- If we read Dickens's realistic novels, we find out that cultural tourism was not practiced by everyone in the 19th century, only by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. Italy was one of their favorite countries. But after the Second World War and until today, there has been a democratization of tourism. With the increase in living standards, especially in Western Europe, many people began to travel to other countries.

• **Material and method**

- The topic of this paper is approached from an interdisciplinary perspective: cultural history, conceptual analysis, English for tourism

• **Results and discussions**

- A common assumption deriving especially from 19th c. travel practices, is that cultural tourism is the most elitist, exclusive and sophisticated form of tourism. Indeed, among the oldest purposes of travel, there is the need for education, aesthetic satisfaction and knowledge, together with those of the religious pilgrimage
- Some theorists attempt to distinguish between "cultural" and "heritage" tourism, limiting the latter to historic sites and buildings as well as the experiences which people seek to have in these places. The quality of this encounter, the collections, the environment, the facilities of a site are all part of "heritage tourism"
- Cultural tourism can be defined as that activity which allows people to experience the different ways of life of others, thereby gaining an understanding of customs, traditions, physical environment, intellectual ideas and places of architectural, historical, archaeological or cultural significance that remain from earlier times. Cultural tourism differs from leisure tourism. It seeks to gain an understanding or appreciation of the nature of the place visited.

• **Conclusions**

- Cultural tourism attracts an increasing number of tourists. According to a European Commission study, 20% of visits to Europe are culturally motivated, while 60% of European tourists are actually interested in cultural discovery during their trip.