



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

**22nd Annual International Conference on
Tourism**

8-12 June 2026, Athens, Greece

**Edited by
Evangelia Kasimati & Olga Gkounta**

2026

Abstracts
22nd Annual International
Conference on Tourism
8-12 June 2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Evangelia Kasimati & Olga Gkounta

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(In Alphabetical Order by Author's Family Name)

Preface		7
Editors' Note		9
Organizing & Scientific Committee		10
Conference Program		11
1.	(Re)discovering the African Roots in Flamenco Music <i>Javier Albo</i>	15
2.	The Art and Experience of Greek Migration to Australian Born Generations <i>Maria Irini Avgoulas & Rebecca Fanany</i>	16
3.	Illegal Wildlife Trafficking - The Dark Side of Traveling across Borders: Malaysia Experience <i>Azlizam Aziz</i>	18
4.	Evolving Travel Risk Perception: Longitudinal Scale Development in a Politically Sensitive Destination (2019–2025) <i>Yasmin Babalou</i>	19
5.	Tourism and Water in Coastal Destinations: Water Governance, Ecological Limits, and Tensions in the Tourism Model - The Case of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico <i>Jose Luis Cornejo-Ortega</i>	21
6.	A Critical Reflection on the Macropolitics of Tourist Safety of Brazil <i>Salete Goncalves, Marcelo Taveira & Endel Costa</i>	22
7.	IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities <i>Adnan Hadziselimovic</i>	24
8.	Investigating Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the African Tourism Industry: Unveiling Trends and Insights through Bibliometric Analysis <i>Mohamed Hamdoun & Firas Daoudi</i>	25
9.	Exploring Novelty as an Aspect of Tourism & Wine Preferences <i>Paulette Hebert, Aditya Jayadas, Nishan Wijetunge, D.W.K. (Kasun) Gayantha, Zahrasadat Hosseini & Rory Hill</i>	27
10.	Towards an Integrated Pilgrimage Services: A Religious Tourism Framework for Optimizing Quality and Value Capture <i>Rahmatina Awaliah Kasri, M. Dawud Arif Khan, Fadlul Imansyah, Muhammad Arief Mufraini, Agung Hendarsa & Risna Triandhari</i>	29
11.	Vision through Sounds: The Life and Work of Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) <i>Dena Kay Jones</i>	31
12.	Quietcations and the Pursuit of Inner Peace: Exploring Solo Travelers' Motivations for Silent Tourism Experiences in Thailand <i>Rimsha Khalid</i>	32
13.	Artists in the Kitchen <i>Pierre Leichner</i>	34

14.	When Less Speaks Louder: Differential Effects of <i>Liubai</i> Types in Short-Form Travel Videos on Narrative Engagement and Visit Intention <i>Sijie Liu, Haiyan Kong, Ye Ding & Jamie (Jie) Sun</i>	35
15.	Beyond Sustainability: Regenerative Pathways in Hospitality and Tourism Development in a Small-Scale Destination <i>Ivanka Lulcheva & Krasimir Aleksandrov</i>	36
16.	How AI Change Tourists' Behavior? <i>Yihui Lyu & Haiyan Kong</i>	38
17.	From Spiritual Practice to Economic Asset: The Developmental Economics of Sacred Travel in Emerging Tourism Regions - The Case of Limpopo Province, South Africa <i>Azwifaneli Nemushungwa</i>	39
18.	Reframing eWOM in Cultural Heritage Destination Image Formation <i>Yudan Peng</i>	41
19.	Illuminating the Night Economy: Exploring the Role of Night Markets in Phuket's Noctourism Landscape <i>Mohsin Raza</i>	42
20.	Public Policies for Tourism Development: An Analysis Based on Perception and Economy - Case Study of the Pueblos Mágicos Program in Michoacán, Mexico <i>Claudia Rodriguez Espinosa, Erika Elizabeth Pérez Múzquiz & Marcela Guadalupe Mariano Romero</i>	44
21.	The Resilient Danza de Matachines Ceremonial <i>Brenda M. Romero</i>	46
22.	Information Design: Mapping Ancient Greece and the Challenge of Diachronicity <i>Thomas Sakoulas</i>	48
23.	From Vacation to Workation: Transforming Phuket into a Digital Nomad Hub <i>Anusara Sawangchai</i>	50
24.	Arts, Artifice, Therapy & the Performative Destination - Pergamon: A Few Glimpses of "Build" and "Showcase" in the Rise of the Ancient Mediterranean's First "Destination" Arts, Resort and University Town <i>David Philip Wick</i>	52
25.	Why Should Dance Resist Being Turned into a Sport? <i>Luis Xarez</i>	54
26.	How Do Flexible Norms Achieve Effectiveness for Sensitive Personal Information Governance in Tourism Big Data Commercialization? <i>Qi Xu</i>	56
References		58

Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 22nd Annual International Conference on Tourism (8-12 June 2026), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with Athens Institute's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of the Athens Institute's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of the Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to the Athens Institute's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2011-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	26	15	Kasimati and Gkounta (2026)
2025	53	23	Kasimati and Gkounta (2025)
2024	30	13	Kasimati and Gkounta (2024)
2023	48	19	Kasimati and Gkounta (2023)
2022	35	17	Kasimati and Gkounta (2022)
2021	36	18	Papanikos (2021)
2020	41	18	Papanikos (2020)
2019	27	14	Papanikos (2019)
2018	24	14	Papanikos (2018)
2017	22	15	Papanikos (2017)
2016	23	16	Papanikos (2016)
2015	29	17	Papanikos (2015)
2014	41	18	Papanikos (2014)
2013	34	19	Papanikos (2013)
2012	22	14	Papanikos (2012)
2011	32	14	Papanikos (2011)

It is our hope that through Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of the Athens Institute for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Tourism. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The *22nd Annual International Conference on Tourism*, accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 15 different countries (Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Evangelia Kasimati & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**22nd Annual International Conference on Tourism, 8-12
June 2026, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of Athens Institute.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

David Philip Wick, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, Athens Institute & Retired Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.

Dr. Evangelia Kasimati, Head, Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit, Athens Institute & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.

Dr. Peter Jones, Co-Editor, Athens Journal of Tourism & Professor of Management, University of Gloucestershire, UK.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
22nd Annual International Conference on Tourism, 8-12 June 2026, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 8 June 2026

08:30-09:15

Registration

09:15-10:00 Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks

Speaker: David Philip Wick, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, Athens Institute & Professor of History (Retired), Gordon College, USA.

10:00-11:30 Session 1

Moderator: Evangelia Kasimati, Head, Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit, Athens Institute & Senior Economist, Economic Analysis and Research Directorate, Bank of Greece, Greece.

1. **Paulette Hebert**, Professor, Oklahoma State University, USA.
Title: Exploring Novelty as an Aspect of Tourism & Wine Preferences.
2. **Azlizam Aziz**, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environment, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.
Title: Illegal Wildlife Trafficking – The Dark Side of Traveling across Borders: Malaysia Experience.
3. **Yasmin Babalou**, Assistant Professor, Lewis University, USA.
Title: Evolving Travel Risk Perception: Longitudinal Scale Development in a Politically Sensitive Destination (2019–2025).
4. **Salete Goncalves**, Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil.
Marcelo Taveira, Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil.
Endel Costa, Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil.
Title: A Critical Reflection on the Macropolitics of Tourist Safety of Brazil.

11:30-13:00 Session 2

Moderator: Azlizam Aziz, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environment, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.

1. **Claudia Rodriguez Espinosa**, Professor and Researcher, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Mexico.
Erika Elizabeth Pérez Múzquiz, Professor and Researcher, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Mexico.
Marcela Guadalupe Mariano Romero, Professor and Researcher, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Mexico.
Title: Public Policies for Tourism Development: An Analysis Based on Perception and Economy – Case Study of the Pueblos Mágicos Program in Michoacán, Mexico.
2. **Rimsha Khalid**, Assistant Professor, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.
Title: Quietcations and the Pursuit of Inner Peace: Exploring Solo Travelers' Motivations for Silent Tourism Experiences in Thailand.
3. **Mohsin Raza**, Lecturer, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.
Title: Illuminating the Night Economy: Exploring the Role of Night Markets in Phuket's Noctourism Landscape.
4. **Rahmatina Awaliah Kasri**, Director, Center for Islamic Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia.
Fadlul Imansyah, Professor, Hajj Financial Management Agency, Indonesia.
Muhammad Arief Mufraini, Professor, Hajj Financial Management Agency, Indonesia.
M. Dawud Arif Khan, Professor, Hajj Financial Management Agency, Indonesia.
Agung Hendarsa, Professor, Hajj Financial Management Agency, Indonesia.
Risna Triandhari, Professor, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia.

<p><i>Title: Towards an Integrated Pilgrimage Services: A Religious Tourism Framework for Optimizing Quality and Value Capture.</i></p>
<p>13:00-14:30 Session 3 Moderator: Peter Baur, Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. David Philip Wick, Professor of History (Retired), Gordon College, USA. <i>Title: Arts, Artifice, Therapy & the Performative Destination – Pergamon: A Few Glimpses of “Build” and “Showcase” in the Rise of the Ancient Mediterranean’s First “Destination” Arts, Resort and University Town.</i>2. Thomas Sakoulas, Professor, State University of New York at Oneonta, USA. <i>Title: Information Design: Mapping Ancient Greece and the Challenge of Diachronicity.</i>3. Maria Irini Avgoulas, Researcher, Cultural Counselling and Consultancy, Australia. Rebecca Fanany, Associate Professor, Central Queensland University, Australia. <i>Title: The Art and Experience of Greek Migration to Australian Born Generations.</i>
<p>14:30-15:00 Session 4 – A Public Lecture on Outsiderness as a Spectrum as part of the Athens Institute <u>Canadian Lecture Series</u> Moderator: Ori Soltes, Head, <u>Arts & Culture Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.</p>
<p>Speaker: Pierre Leichner, Vice President, Community Art Council of Vancouver, Canada.</p>
<p>Summary: Outsider art refers to a broad field of practice encompassing artists who may be self-taught or formally trained, but whose work develops outside early institutional, academic, and market validation. Often members of equity-deserving communities, these artists encounter systemic barriers to access, visibility, and recognition. Despite their foundational influence on modern and contemporary art since the early twentieth century, outsider artists and their contributions remain under-referenced within dominant art-historical narratives and institutional frameworks. This presentation traces the evolution of outsider art from its origins in Art Brut to its contemporary emergence as an expanded field of practice. I will examine current outsider-focused festivals in Canada and internationally, and present selected case studies of contemporary artists to illustrate the diversity of practices, contexts, and lived experiences encompassed by outsiderness. The presentation concludes by identifying persistent structural barriers faced by outsider artists and proposes understanding outsiderness not as a fixed category, but as a fluid spectrum shaped by social, cultural, and institutional conditions.</p>
<p>15:00-16:00 Lunch</p>
<p>18:00-20:00 Session 5 – Visit Aristotle’s Lyceum</p>
<p>It requires pre-booking</p>
<p>20:30-22:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)</p>
<p>Tuesday 9 June 2026</p>
<p>09:00-11:00 Session 6 Moderator: Errik Hood, Assistant Professor & Director of Vocal Performance, New York University Steinhardt, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Javier Albo, Professor, Georgia State University, USA. <i>Title: (Re)discovering the African Roots in Flamenco Music.</i>2. Dena Kay Jones, Professor, The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), USA. <i>Title: Vision through Sounds: The Life and Work of Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999).</i>

<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Brenda M. Romero, Professor Emerita, University of Colorado Boulder, USA. <i>Title: The Resilient Danza de Matachines Ceremonial.</i>4. Pierre Leichner, Vice President, Community Art Council of Vancouver, Canada. <i>Title: Artists in the Kitchen.</i>5. Adnan Hadziselimovic, Associate Professor, University of Malta, Malta. <i>Title: IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities.</i>6. Luis Xarez, Assistant Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal. <i>Title: Why Should Dance Resist Being Turned into a Sport?</i>
<p>11:00-13:00 Session 7 Moderator: Mohsin Raza, Lecturer, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Jose Luis Cornejo-Ortega, Professor, University of Guadalajara, Mexico. <i>Title: Tourism and Water in Coastal Destinations: Water Governance, Ecological Limits, and Tensions in the Tourism Model. The Case of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.</i>2. Azwifaneli Nemushungwa, Senior Lecturer, University of Venda, South Africa. <i>Title: From Spiritual Practice to Economic Asset: The Developmental Economics of Sacred Travel in Emerging Tourism Regions – The Case of Limpopo Province, South Africa.</i>3. Ivanka Lulcheva, Head, Department of Tourism and Associate Professor, Agricultural University Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Krasimir Aleksandrov, Associate Professor, Agricultural University Plovdiv, Bulgaria. <i>Title: Beyond Sustainability: Regenerative Pathways in Hospitality and Tourism Development in a Small-Scale Destination.</i>4. Anusara Sawangchai, Assistant Professor, Phuket Rajabhat University, Thailand. <i>Title: From Vacation to Workation: Transforming Phuket into a Digital Nomad Hub.</i>5. Mohamed Hamdoun, Associate Professor, University of Tunis, Tunisia. Firas Daoudi, PhD Student, University of Tunis, Tunisia. <i>Title: Investigating Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the African Tourism Industry: Unveiling Trends and Insights through Bibliometric Analysis.</i>
<p>13:00-14:30 Session 8 Moderator: Azwifaneli Nemushungwa, Senior Lecturer, University of Venda, South Africa.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Qi Xu, Institute Council Member, Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, China. <i>Title: How Do Flexible Norms Achieve Effectiveness for Sensitive Personal Information Governance in Tourism Big Data Commercialization?</i>2. Yudan Peng, PhD Candidate, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. <i>Title: Reframing eWOM in Cultural Heritage Destination Image Formation.</i>3. Sijie Liu, PhD Student, Shandong University, China. Haiyan Kong, Professor, Shandong University, China. Ye Ding, Associate Professor, Shanghai University, China. Jamie (Jie) Sun, Associate Professor, California State Polytechnic University, USA. <i>Title: When Less Speaks Louder: Differential Effects of Liubai Types in Short-Form Travel Videos on Narrative Engagement and Visit Intention.</i>4. Yihui Lyu, Master's Student, Shandong University, China. Haiyan Kong, Professor, Shandong University, China. <i>Title: How AI Change Tourists' Behavior?</i>
<p>14:30-15:00 Lunch</p>
<p>16:30-19:30 Session 9 Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk</p>
<p>The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the</p>

Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:30

Closing Remarks by Gregory T. Papanikos: “Wine, Words, and Wisdom: An Ancient Athenian Dinner Symposium” followed by an Ancient Athenian Dinner

**Wednesday 10 June 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit**

**Thursday 11 June 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi
Friday 12 June 2026
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion**

Javier Albo

Professor, Georgia State University, USA

(Re)discovering the African Roots in Flamenco Music

In the last decades, modern scholarship on Flamenco art, in Spain and other countries (including the United States), has progressively abandoned the idea that the always elusive roots of Flamenco music and dance have one precise origin: the folk traditions of the gypsies (Roma) who settled in Spain sometime in the 16th century. The theory that musical traditions brought into Spain and the colonies in the Americas from Sub-Saharan regions, through the slave trade, has been gaining momentum in recent years. Slave trade was nearly as strong in southern Spain (Andalusia) as in the Spanish colonies in the Americas, beginning in the 16th century. Evidence of such influence is being acknowledged also among performers, who have started to include a wider, richer, multi-cultural approach to their music-and-dance making, conforming what it is nowadays known as “New Flamenco,” which is helping maintain that wonderful and sophisticated form of folk art alive and current, and more relevant to peoples from all parts of the world. This presentation aims at exploring these novel aspects currents in Flamenco scholarship.

Maria Irimi Avgoulas

Researcher, Cultural Counselling and Consultancy, Australia
&

Rebecca Fanany

Associate Professor, Central Queensland University, Australia

The Art and Experience of Greek Migration to Australian Born Generations

A collection of studies undertaken in recent times that looked specifically at the experience of migration to the Australian born generations, of the Greek diaspora of Melbourne, Australia. A plethora of literature was examined on the topic and data was analysed – using principle of thematic analysis and semiotics, to better understand the experience.

These various research projects were carried out using a qualitative method, capable of eliciting the subjective reality of the participants who took part in this study. The aim being to understand the way in which the participants understood their own experience as well as the way in which they felt these experiences relate to their ancestral culture and their perceptions of being of Greek background in Australia. An ethnographic approach involving a process of in-depth interviews was used to give a voice to these participants by presenting their experiences and the meanings they give to them. Participants in this study were of Greek cultural background with extended family residing in Melbourne, Australia as well in Greece.

From the data that was collected through in-depth interviews what was elucidated by all participants who in fact uniformly voiced was the positive aspects of the Greek culture and Greek Orthodox religion, and as how this positivity was transmitted as an art that was handed down without intention or pressure as something that occurred quite naturally despite the many challenges of migration not only to the migrants themselves but also to their Australian born descendants. For example one participant mentioned that in recent times they were called a wog, and this happened despite them being Australian. Another said he was told to go back where he came from and he was confused as to what they were saying as his grandparents were born in Greece, but he and his parents were Australian born. Racism is felt generally and unfortunately still felt by those born in Australia (in both Australia and Greece), despite their Greek heritage and in fact being Australian with Greek heritage (and having both family and friends in both countries) They mentioned that due to having a diasporic identity they often felt more Greek in

diaspora than and in Greece where they felt like a foreigner and that they did not belong.

Azlizam Aziz

Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environment, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, Malaysia

Illegal Wildlife Trafficking – The Dark Side of Traveling across Borders: Malaysia Experience

Illegal wildlife trafficking (IWT) represents one of the most pressing conservation and governance challenges in Southeast Asia. As a biodiversity-rich nation, Malaysia occupies a central role in the global wildlife trade network – serving as both a source and a transit country for endangered flora and fauna. This paper examines the dark side of wildlife trafficking through the lens of tourism and cross-border travel, highlighting Malaysia's experience within a regional network spanning Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore and is based on recent research conducted with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency. The focus of the study was to analyze current trends and history of illegal wildlife trade based on a database of seizures, arrests, and prosecutions recorded by enforcement agencies such as the Department of Wildlife and National Park (DWNP), the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM), and the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, and to develop persuasive communication messages based on the findings of psychological studies on consumer behavior to reduce demand for wildlife-based products across national borders. Tourism, while often celebrated for its role in promoting environmental awareness and generating conservation funding, paradoxically contributes to wildlife exploitation through the demand for exotic souvenirs, live animal encounters, and pet trade markets. The rise in cross-border travel and the proliferation of digital tourism platforms have intensified the movement of wildlife and derived products, often disguised as cultural commodities or ecotourism experiences. Drawing from recent enforcement data, community perceptions, and communication-based conservation strategies, this paper discusses how demand reduction, legal instruments, and behavior change interventions contribute to curbing IWT. The findings reveal that although enforcement and policy mechanisms are in place, their success depends on community awareness and ethical tourism practices and demonstrate the importance of raising public awareness and changing attitudes and beliefs about IWT behaviour. The paper concludes by recommending an integrated legislative and communication approach involving border communities, travellers and local institutions to foster behavioural transformation towards wildlife protection in the country.

Yasmin Babalou

Assistant Professor, Lewis University, USA

Evolving Travel Risk Perception: Longitudinal Scale Development in a Politically Sensitive Destination (2019–2025)

Tourism experiences are shaped not only by what travelers encounter at destinations but also by psychological evaluations formed before travel occurs. Among these evaluations, perceived travel risk plays a central role in determining whether individuals engage with a destination at all. Although tourism research has extensively examined perceived risk, most studies rely on static and universal typologies (e.g., physical, financial, and social risk) that overlook how risk perceptions evolve over time and across geopolitical contexts. Moreover, existing frameworks rarely connect risk perception to the broader experiential paradigm, in which emotions, identity, values, and anticipated meaning shape engagement decisions. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing perceived risk as a pre-experience psychological filter and developing a longitudinal measurement framework that captures how risk perceptions change and influence travel intentions.

The research develops and validates a multidimensional Travel Risk Perception Scale using Iran as an empirical context. The destination provides a suitable case because it is associated with strong media narratives, political tensions, and cultural unfamiliarity, making it an example of a reputationally complex tourism environment. Rather than focusing on the destination itself, the study examines how travelers interpret uncertainty and how those interpretations affect their willingness to engage in a tourism experience.

The research follows Churchill's (1979) scale development procedure and is conducted in two phases separated by major geopolitical developments. Phase I (2019) establishes the baseline structure of travel risk perception. Qualitative content analysis of travel advisories, media reports, and tourism discourse generated an initial item pool. The items were tested through multi-stage quantitative validation with U.S. respondents using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). The results supported a second-order three-dimension model consisting of Destination-Specific Risk, General Safety Risk, and Waste-of-Resources Risk. Nomological testing demonstrated that perceived risk negatively influences both cognitive and affective destination image and significantly reduces behavioral intention to visit.

Phase II (2025) updates the scale to reflect emerging perceptions after major sociopolitical events. A multi-source thematic analysis of academic literature, government travel advisories, international news coverage, tourism platforms, and social media discourse identified new forms of concern that were not present in earlier tourism risk frameworks. These included information and communication risk (e.g., trust in information sources and communication limitations) and moral/ethical risk (e.g., value conflict and perceived complicity). New items were developed and incorporated into the measurement framework to capture the evolving psychological meaning of risk.

The findings demonstrate that travel risk perception is dynamic and socially constructed rather than limited to physical danger. Beyond safety concerns, individuals evaluate destinations based on identity compatibility, moral alignment, and narrative trust. These perceptions shape emotional anticipation of the travel experience and function as a gatekeeping mechanism influencing engagement decisions. The study therefore positions risk perception as part of experiential decision-making rather than merely a safety evaluation.

This research contributes to tourism and hospitality literature in three ways. First, it extends risk perception theory by introducing a temporal perspective, showing that risk dimensions evolve alongside geopolitical narratives. Second, it integrates risk into the experience economy framework by demonstrating that perceived risk determines whether experiential engagement occurs. Third, it provides a validated measurement instrument that can be adapted to other reputationally complex destinations.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that destination marketing organizations should address not only safety concerns but also ethical narratives and information credibility when designing communication strategies. Managing traveler perception requires engagement with values, trust, and identity alignment, not only reassurance about physical security.

Jose Luis Cornejo-Ortega
Professor, University of Guadalajara, Mexico

**Tourism and Water in Coastal Destinations:
Water Governance, Ecological Limits, and Tensions in the
Tourism Model - The Case of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**

Tourism growth in coastal destinations has significantly increased pressure on local water supply systems, creating tensions between economic development, territorial equity, and environmental sustainability. However, most studies address this issue from technical and efficiency-based perspectives, paying limited attention to its political and structural dimensions. This article critically examines the relationship between tourism development and water management in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, integrating political ecology, circular economy, and territorial resilience frameworks.

A qualitative case study design was adopted, based on systematic critical document analysis of two complementary corpora: specialized scientific literature and local institutional sources. Through this multi-scalar comparison, six interpretative axes were identified, addressing resource appropriation, tourism water intensity, socio-environmental cost externalization, governance structures, the scope of circular practices, and territorial resilience.

Findings indicate that tourism functions as a structural driver of water demand intensification, reshaping territorial allocation patterns and transferring environmental and financial costs to public institutions and local communities. Efficiency and reuse strategies associated with circular economy approaches prove insufficient to offset overall consumption growth. The study concludes that water sustainability in coastal tourism depends less on technological improvements and more on governance reforms, demand regulation, and distributive justice. These results contribute an integrated critical framework and empirical evidence from Latin America to the international debate on tourism and water management.

Salete Goncalves

Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil

Marcelo Taveira

Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil

&

Endel Costa

Professor, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil

**A Critical Reflection on the Macropolitics of Tourist Safety
of Brazil**

This study aims to discuss and reflect about the content of Macropolitic of Tourist Safety of Brazil and its repercussions in the destinations, considering the premises of the Safe Tourism Program (PTS) and the Projects “Brazil, this is our beach!” and “Brazil, Responsible Tourism”. This research is exploratory-descriptive, with qualitative approach, from documental analyses, literature review specialized in the core theme of the investigation and the technical material made by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) and the Ministry of Tourism of Brazil, besides consultations to digital platforms and data from international organizations that regard to Tourist Safety. The research methodology has considered the theoretical-conceptual framework, the Brazilian legal and institutional basis and the scientific and technical production raised to analyze the critical-reflective-interpretative nature of ongoing scientific investigation, focusing on the content of institutional projects mentioned and the online platform (Digital Hub) of the Ministry of Tourism containing the main policies, strategies and actions related to the development of tourism in the country and its connections to the Tourist Safety. The partial results of the study demonstrate that despite of the effort of the Federal Government and the Federative Units of Brazil in promoting safe tourism in the country, especially in the most visited destinations, the repercussions of the “macropolitic” of Tourist Safety is still in its early stages, not being able to reach entirely and efficiently the objectives and goals of the PTS and scientific researches developed by UFRN and by other education and research institutions, based on the proposed strategies, initiatives and actions. Constituting an effective and comprehensive Macropolitic of Tourist Safety that addresses the range of demands of social, economic, political, technical, scientific and environmental order, requires a collective effort of the public institutions in different instances of governance of the Three Branches of Government (Executive, Judicial and Legislative), that considers the

needs of the tourists, tourism service providers and resident populations. The physical, technological, and intelligence infrastructure for public safety, as well as the specialized tourist policing, reverberate as relevant strategic actions in the national reality, being fundamental to promote the feeling of safety in the destinations as verified in the Brazilian Map of Responsible Tourism, although still insufficient to meet the multiple and complex demands associated to tourism, such as: transport and mobility, environmental sustainability and climatic emergency, consumption relations, production of reliable technical-scientific data are some of the examples of the need of improvement of the studies and content referent to the Macropolitic of Tourist Safety. In this perspective, to think about the elaboration of this macropolitic with the plural and democratic participation, widely representative and constituted by several instances of governance and by agents, operators and social actors who act in national tourism is an imperative condition in this process, considering the region, city, territory, or tourist destination, as places of production/reproduction of collective space of residency, work, experiences, and social relations and exchanges, which also coexists with the logic of national/international tourism in effect in contemporary times.

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IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities

This paper delves into the performing and exhibiting of digital heritage within immersive experiences, a transformative approach explored within the IMPULSE research project. IMPULSE investigates innovative methods for experiencing and interpreting digitised cultural heritage within immersive virtual environments, challenging conventional narratives through speculative and inclusive frameworks. By integrating emerging immersive technologies, the project re-imagines the role of digital heritage in contemporary cultural discourse.

At its core, IMPULSE employs artistic research methodologies to interrogate and expand the potential of digital heritage archives and assets. Through performances and exhibitions, the project creates dynamic, usercentered experiences that foster emotional and cognitive engagement. These speculative interpretations serve to question normative understandings of digital heritage archives and reshape their cultural significance. This approach highlights the capacity of immersive technologies to make digital heritage more accessible and inclusive while addressing critical challenges such as interoperability and design.

The paper also examines the role of artistic research in transforming digital heritage practices, emphasizing its power to unlock new layers of meaning in cultural artifacts. The IMPULSE research project transcends traditional boundaries, offering audiences an active role in the reinterpretation of heritage. The findings underscore the potential of immersive and performative methodologies to redefine the dissemination and experience of cultural heritage in the digital age.

The paper demonstrates how IMPULSE's integration of technology, artistic research, and speculative design contributes to a more inclusive and dynamic cultural heritage landscape. It highlights the project's significance in addressing pressing issues of accessibility and representation, demonstrating how performing digital heritage can challenge and enrich our understanding of the past. This innovative approach not only expands the scope of heritage research but also positions immersive experiences as a tool for cultural engagement and reinterpretation.

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Investigating Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the African Tourism Industry: Unveiling Trends and Insights through Bibliometric Analysis

Entrepreneurship, sustainability, and tourism are closely interconnected and play a significant role in advancing sustainable development, particularly in African countries. Tourism is among the fastest-growing economic sectors globally and holds significant potential to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when aligned with sustainable entrepreneurial practices. Africa, known with its rich cultural heritage, biodiversity, and diverse landscapes, is well positioned to leverage tourism as a driver of economic growth. However, the sustainability of the tourism sector remains threatened by persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, socio-economic inequalities, and political instability. These constraints highlight the importance of fostering sustainable entrepreneurship in tourism as a means to promote innovation, resilience, and inclusive development through approaches such as eco-tourism, community-based tourism, and renewable energy integration. Despite the growing relevance of this intersection, the academic literature addressing entrepreneurship, sustainability, and tourism in the African context remains fragmented and lacks coherence and regional specificity. This research aims to address this gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis to systematically map the intellectual structure of this research domain. The study seeks to identify research trends, thematic clusters, influential contributions, and existing knowledge gaps, thereby offering insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

This study employs bibliometric tools to analyze co-authorship networks, co-citation patterns, and keyword co-occurrence within the literature. Data are collected from the Web of Science database using keywords related to entrepreneurship, sustainability, tourism, and Africa. The analysis is guided by the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and focuses on studies published between 2004 and 2024 to ensure relevance to contemporary challenges. The study addresses two main research questions: (1) What are the dominant research trends at the intersection

of entrepreneurship, sustainability, and tourism in Africa? and (2) What future research directions should be prioritized? By synthesizing literature through bibliometric analysis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how entrepreneurship can support sustainable tourism development. Indeed, it highlights the transformative potential of sustainable tourism entrepreneurship in fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development across the African continent.

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Exploring Novelty as an Aspect of Tourism & Wine Preferences

The search for novelty has long been recognized as a key driver of tourism. Tourism offers opportunities to experience settings, cultures, and activities that differ from one's day-to-day routine. Wine tourism refers to the people who visit wineries and the experiences they have at these locations. Wine tourism is growing worldwide. In response to this trend, universities have expanded wine education and related research efforts to meet increasing interest in wine culture and tourism. Novelty may influence individual wine preferences, encouraging the choice of unfamiliar, new, or exotic wines. Building on this understanding, the current study aimed to examine whether differences in openness to novel wines between university students and non-student adults. During Spring 2024, researchers conducted an online survey as part of a broader investigation into wine preferences and novelty seeking behaviors. Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a questionnaire was distributed to two groups: 26 undergraduate design students and 26 non-student adults. Participants completed demographic questions; rated wine preferences on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The primary objective was to assess whether there were notable differences between the two groups regarding openness to trying unfamiliar wines. There were 52 participants. Students ranged in age from 21 to 43 years (24.88, SD = 6.41); non-student adults ranged from 34 to 79 years (56.83, SD = 13.04). The student group included 23 females and three males, and the non-student adult group consisted of 17 females and nine males. Ethnic backgrounds among students included 11 Caucasians, two Native Americans, six Asians, three Hispanics, one African American, and three "other". Non-student adults were

predominantly Caucasian. Regarding education, students included 19 undergraduates, five master's students, and two PhD students, while non-students had a broader mix of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Students demonstrated a stronger preference for wines they were already familiar with (4.08) compared to non-student adults (3.42), although this difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.4$). Interestingly, non-student adults reported significantly lower fear of trying unfamiliar wines (1.27) compared to students (2.56) ($p = 0.02$). Non-student adults also rated their wine knowledge higher (2.88) than students (2.00) ($p < 0.001$) and placed greater importance on wine quality (4.16) compared to students (3.12) ($p < 0.001$). Other aspects, such as willingness to try unusual wines, drink exotic wines, or explore wines from different countries, showed no significant differences between the two groups. This study suggests that while both students and non-student adults engage with wine, their perspectives toward novelty differ. Non-student adults appeared more confident and less hesitant to try unfamiliar wines, likely reflecting greater life experience and broader exposure. Students, on the other hand, showed a stronger attachment to familiar wines, which may stem from limited experiences with wine varieties and a lack of confidence in making wine selections. These findings highlight how the concept of novelty interacts with wine preferences across different life stages.

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**Towards an Integrated Pilgrimage Services:
A Religious Tourism Framework for Optimizing Quality
and Value Capture**

Islamic religious pilgrimages, namely Hajj and Umrah, are increasingly important amongst Muslim globally and in Indonesia. Indeed, Indonesia is among the world's largest sources of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, with around 241,000 Hajj pilgrims in 2024 and more than 1.5 million Umrah pilgrims annually. Yet, Indonesia's domestic economic capture from this pilgrimage economy remains limited as only about 30% is estimated to return as inward spending. This pattern suggests weak domestic value-chain integration and fragmented multi-actor governance, which can also undermine the consistency and reliability of the pilgrimage experience.

This study aims to develop a conceptual and policy-oriented framework for strengthening Indonesia's Hajj-Umrah Ecosystem through a religious tourism lens by conceptualising pilgrimage as an integrated service ecosystem. The research is motivated by a key gap in pilgrimage and religious tourism studies: while prior work often emphasises spiritual motives and pilgrim satisfaction, fewer studies specify how ecosystem governance—actor roles, coordination mechanisms, and end-to-end service linkages—systematically shapes both the quality of the sacred journey and domestic value creation in a major sending country.

The research employs a qualitative research method combining desk study of regulations and institutional arrangements, synthesis of ecosystem theory, and stakeholder mapping based on the pilgrim

consumer journey. Primary data will be collected through detailed interviews and group discussions with important stakeholders (like regulators, academics, industry professionals, and related organisations) to confirm the definition of the Hajj-Umrah Ecosystem, the roles of stakeholders, and how services are connected.

Expected outputs include an operational definition of the Hajj-Umrah Ecosystem as a religious tourism ecosystem oriented to safeguarding and enhancing the sacred experience; an end-to-end map of actors, activities, and critical service interfaces affecting pilgrim safety, health, guidance, and travel continuity; and governance recommendations to strengthen orchestration, cross-sector collaboration, and domestic value-chain integration to improve inward economic capture.

The study's scholarly contribution is expected to advance religious tourism literature by introducing an ecosystem-governance approach that links pilgrimage experience quality (service reliability supporting spiritual well-being) with multilateral coordination and value-capture mechanisms in large sending countries. In practical terms, the study is expected to generate policy-relevant insights for improving pilgrim protection and satisfaction while expanding domestic participation in supporting industries within the Hajj-Umrah Ecosystem.

Dena Kay Jones

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**Vision through Sounds: The Life and Work of Joaquín
Rodrigo (1901-1999)**

Blind at the age of three due to an epidemic of diphtheria that swept through his hometown of Sagunto, Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) survived both World Wars, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), as well as numerous personal challenges to become one of the most beloved composers of the twentieth century. This presentation takes the author Dr. Dena Kay Jones' expertise, research, and performance experiences—which are based on the life and solo piano music of blind Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo—to audience members, who have the option of removing their sight while participating. She invites those in attendance to use her multimedia presentation to examine their trust in themselves and in the sighted world where most of us live. Set in a lecture format, the session includes dissemination of research, visual guides (photos and audio/video), and recorded music. In addition to a select bibliography of Dr. Jones' collected citations, she offers a blindfold, encouraging participants to go “under occlusion” and listen from a completely different perspective. The program, which has been deemed “an auditory feast,” as well as a “challenging introspective,” has altered the way people perceive themselves and others—especially in the realms of vision and sound.

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Quietcations and the Pursuit of Inner Peace: Exploring Solo Travelers' Motivations for Silent Tourism Experiences in Thailand

The increase in digital connectivity and constant exposure to global information have contributed to heightened stress, fatigue, and mental overload among individuals. As a response to these pressures and a fast-paced life, new forms of tourism focused on mental restoration and disconnection are emerging. One such trend expected to dominate future travel behavior is the concept of "quietcations," also known as hushpality. Quietcations emphasize silence, comfort, and mindfulness, and provide tourists with opportunities to disconnect from the noise of everyday life temporarily. This growing trend reflects a shift in tourist preferences from highly active and crowded destinations toward peaceful, restorative environments that support psychological well-being. In this context, Thailand is a compelling destination for quietcation experiences, with its rich natural landscapes, tranquil islands, wellness retreats, and cultural traditions centered on mindfulness and spirituality. This exploratory study investigates the motivations, experiences, and perceived benefits of quietcation travel among solo tourists visiting Thailand. Solo travelers represent an important segment in this emerging trend, as they often seek personal reflection, emotional healing, and independence during their journeys. Thailand's destinations, such as secluded beaches, forest retreats, meditation centers, and wellness resorts, offer environments that align closely with the principles of quietcation. Despite the growing popularity of wellness tourism, research on the quietcation phenomenon and its relevance to solo travel experiences in Thailand remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore how solo tourists interpret and experience quietcations and how these experiences contribute to their psychological well-being and travel satisfaction. Using an exploratory research design, qualitative data would be collected from solo tourists traveling in selected destinations across Thailand known for peaceful and restorative environments. Semi-structured interviews and reflective narratives would be used to understand tourists' motivations for seeking quiet travel experiences, the role of silence and disconnection during their trips, and the emotional and psychological outcomes associated with their journeys. The findings would reveal why solo tourists are increasingly motivated to escape digital overload and reconnect with

themselves through calm, meaningful travel experiences. Participants would be asked about the impacts on them of the natural surroundings, minimal digital distractions, and opportunities for mindfulness activities such as meditation, nature walks, and wellness practices. The study will highlight the quietcation experiences' contribution to improved mental clarity, emotional balance, and a deeper sense of personal reflection among solo travelers. Moreover, Thailand's tourism infrastructure, hospitality culture, and natural settings create favorable conditions for developing quietcation oriented tourism products. This study will contribute to the emerging discourse on alternative tourism trends by introducing quietcations as a meaningful framework within wellness and sustainable tourism studies. It will provide practical insights for tourism stakeholders in Thailand to design experiences that prioritize tranquility, mindfulness, and digital disconnection, particularly for the growing market of solo travelers seeking restorative travel experiences.

Pierre Leichner

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Artists in the Kitchen

In this presentation I will briefly review the history food and the arts and present my works in the context of current art practices.

It has been called the *sensory turn* or *gustatory turn*. While food has long appeared in art – from still lifes and ritual imagery to depictions of feasting – since the late 20th century artists have increasingly treated food not only as a subject but also as a medium, event, social practice, and site of research. This shift reflects broader cultural and socio-political currents as well as the influence of sensory studies and art practices such as environmental art, activist art, community-engaged art, performance art, relational aesthetics, and gastronomy as cultural expressionism. It also extends into film, photography, and digital media sharing.

I am an interdisciplinary artist with a socially engaged practice focusing on environmental and mental health issues. Over the past twenty years, my work has frequently addressed food-related concerns through a range of projects: *Food Wars* (2008, photography and sculpture), *Coffee Tables* (installation, 2009), *Root Laboratory* (root sculptures, 2009), *Jardin Biologique* (installation, 2010–2012), *Dr. Légumes*, performances featuring a “plastic surgeon for vegetables” and chef (2009–ongoing), *GrassRoots* (sculptures and installations, 2012–2025), *Artists in the Kitchen* (community-engaged art, 2023–2025), *We Are Nature* (Environmental Art Festival, 2023–2025), and *Worm Art Paintings* (2021–2024).

The renewed prominence of food in artistic practice is not a passing trend but a convergence of intellectual, social, and technological developments – ranging from sensory and food studies to socio-political issues of labor, migration, and climate change, as well as institutional and digital engagement. This field is inherently interdisciplinary, with meaningful work often emerging through collaborations among artists, chefs, scientists, ethnographers, and conservators.

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**When Less Speaks Louder:
Differential Effects of *Liubai* Types in Short-Form Travel
Videos on Narrative Engagement and Visit Intention**

Liubai, the deliberate use of white space to evoke creative imagination and aesthetic pleasure, is foundational to Chinese aesthetics. While widely employed in art practice, its potential in digital media marketing remains underexplored. This study introduces the *liubai* concept into short-form travel video research, examining how distinct *liubai* types shape narrative engagement and visit intention. Study 1 utilized focus group interviews to identify three core *liubai* types: voice-over *liubai*, background music *liubai*, and visual *liubai*. Study 2 adopted a scenario-based experiment grounded in narrative transportation theory and the self-generation effect. The narrative gaps created by voice-over *liubai* activate viewer to interpret imagery and construct narrative, fostering deeper immersion. The results show that voice-over *liubai* consistently leads to higher cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and visit intention compared to the non *liubai* condition. However, its advantage over background music and visual *liubai* is less consistent. Additionally, the influence of *liubai* on visit intentions is mediated predominantly by emotional engagement rather than cognitive engagement, consistent with *liubai*'s function as a source of aesthetic pleasure rather than cognitive effort. By integrating Chinese traditional aesthetics with narrative persuasion mechanisms, this study extends theoretical perspectives on short-form video marketing and provides critical insights for tourism marketing practitioners: in an era of information overload, strategic silence and absence may prove more persuasive than incessant exposition.

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Beyond Sustainability: Regenerative Pathways in Hospitality and Tourism Development in a Small-Scale Destination

This study examines the transition from sustainability to regenerative development in hospitality and tourism, with a specific focus on small-scale destinations. It explores how regenerative principles can be applied to enhance environmental, socio-cultural, and economic outcomes, using a spa destination in Southern Bulgaria as an illustrative case within a broader global context. The research evaluates natural resources, tourism infrastructure, environmental impacts, and the attitudes of local residents and visitors, while also considering available financial support mechanisms. In addition, the study outlines the theoretical foundations of regenerative development and its relevance as an advanced paradigm for tourism transformation.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. An assessment of the current state of tourism and hospitality was conducted, with particular attention to the characteristics of a small-scale spa destination. Environmental and social impacts were examined through empirical data collected from three main stakeholder groups: accommodation providers, tourists, and local residents. Data collection involved online surveys distributed to hotels, guesthouses, and private accommodation units, as well as questionnaires targeting randomly selected visitors. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews were conducted with members of the local community. The survey instruments were designed to ensure the collection of detailed, reliable, and context-specific information.

The findings reveal that small-scale destinations possess significant potential to adopt regenerative tourism models due to the close interconnection between natural resources, local communities, and tourism activities. The case of Mineralni Bani demonstrates that mineral springs represent a key asset supporting well-established balneological tourism. Additional strengths include rich cultural and historical heritage, favorable natural conditions, and opportunities for authentic rural tourism experiences. However, several limitations were identified,

including insufficient integration of cultural sites into a unified tourism product, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited diversification of tourism offerings. These challenges restrict visitor engagement, length of stay, and overall competitiveness in the destination.

The study demonstrates that moving beyond sustainability toward regeneration requires a systemic and integrated approach. This includes the development of tourism products that connect natural, cultural, and wellness resources, improvements in infrastructure and accessibility, and the active involvement of local stakeholders. Emphasis is placed on creating value not only for visitors but also for local communities and ecosystems. Practical implications include the need for a comprehensive regenerative tourism strategy, capacity building among local actors, diversification of year-round tourism products, and the establishment of partnerships with academic and research institutions to foster innovation and knowledge exchange.

From a broader perspective, the research highlights the role of small-scale destinations as suitable environments for implementing regenerative tourism due to their flexibility, authenticity, and lower levels of overdevelopment. The examined destination demonstrates the potential to serve as a model for regenerative tourism development in similar contexts. The study contributes to the limited academic literature on regenerative tourism, particularly in Eastern Europe, by proposing an integrated framework that supports ecosystem restoration, community well-being, and sustainable economic development. Ultimately, it positions regenerative development as a transformative pathway for the future of hospitality and tourism in small-scale destinations worldwide.

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How AI Change Tourists' Behavior?

This study examines the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on tourists' psychology and behavior, focusing on three key areas: the impact of AI across all travel stages, its psychological effects on tourists, and tourists' reactions to AI. Conducting a meta-analysis based on 112 published studies with 82,619 participants, the study yields the following findings: 1) AI significantly transforms tourists' behavior throughout the whole journey. This includes technology adoption, decision-making, word-of-mouth (WOM), interaction, and responsible behaviors. Pre-trip, AI predicts preferences to tailor itineraries, thereby shaping initial decisions and expectations. During the trip, AI tools create unique experiences and enable value co-creation between tourists and providers. Post-trip, AI enhances satisfaction while fostering long-term loyalty through targeted feedback mechanisms and personalized follow-up services. 2) AI integration introduces new behavioral patterns. These patterns mark a significant cognitive and emotional shift compared to traditional tourism models. Notably, AI significantly fosters the generation of positive emotions and trust among tourists, far outweighing any negative influence. 3) This paper further explores ongoing transformations of tourists' behavior, including the convergence of authenticity and virtual reality. By analyzing these impacts, the study extends the boundaries of AI application in tourism research and lays a robust foundation for future research. Furthermore, it furnishes the tourism sector with comprehensive empirical data and theoretical guidance for navigating the AI era.

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**From Spiritual Practice to Economic Asset:
The Developmental Economics of Sacred Travel in
Emerging Tourism Regions – The Case of Limpopo
Province, South Africa**

Sacred travel, defined as journeys undertaken for religious, spiritual, and cultural purposes, constitutes an important yet under-examined segment of the tourism and regional development economy. Globally, pilgrimage and faith-based mobility generate substantial economic spillovers through accommodation demand, transport services, informal trading, and heritage preservation. In many contexts, sacred travel functions not only as a spiritual practice but also as a recurring economic stimulus that sustains local livelihoods and reinforces territorial identity. Despite its cultural prominence, however, sacred travel remains insufficiently analysed through an explicit economic lens, particularly within provincial development discourse in South Africa.

In Limpopo Province, sacred travel is embedded in indigenous belief systems, ancestral pilgrimage sites, Christian religious gatherings, Zionist church movements, and traditional ceremonial practices. These forms of mobility are often seasonal and event-based, generating temporary yet significant concentrations of visitors in predominantly rural communities. Such flows create periodic surges in demand for goods and services, especially in areas that otherwise experience limited tourism activity. Nevertheless, provincial tourism strategies tend to prioritise wildlife, eco-tourism, and heritage attractions, while faith-based mobility is largely framed as a cultural or sociological phenomenon rather than as an economic asset.

This study adopts a narrative review methodology to synthesise interdisciplinary literature from tourism economics, cultural economics, development studies, and regional planning, alongside relevant policy documents and provincial reports. The review conceptualises sacred travel as a component of the cultural economy and as a sub-sector of faith-based tourism with measurable direct, indirect, and induced economic effects. Particular attention is given to visitor expenditure patterns, local multiplier dynamics, informal sector participation, seasonality, and spatial development impacts in rural areas.

The findings suggest that sacred travel stimulates local economic activity through accommodation services, transport operations, catering, craft markets, and small-scale retail trade. Direct expenditure by pilgrims

and religious visitors supports income generation and employment, while indirect linkages benefit local suppliers and service providers. Induced effects further strengthen local income circulation as earnings are re-spent within communities. Informal vendors—often women and youth, benefit significantly from event-based demand peaks associated with sacred gatherings. In addition, sacred sites reinforce place-based cultural heritage assets that encourage repeat visitation and contribute to destination resilience.

However, inadequate infrastructure, weak destination marketing, limited data on faith-based tourism flows, and fragmented governance structures constrain the sector's full economic potential. The absence of coordinated planning between tourism authorities, cultural institutions, and traditional leadership limits opportunities for value chain development and sustainable investment.

By reframing sacred travel in Limpopo as an economic development mechanism rather than solely a religious or cultural practice, this study contributes to broader debates on inclusive regional growth and tourism diversification. Situating sacred mobility within regional economic analysis provides policy-relevant insights for leveraging faith-based tourism as a culturally grounded and sustainable development pathway in Limpopo Province.

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Reframing eWOM in Cultural Heritage Destination Image Formation

In the digital tourism context, destination image is shaped more and more by user-generated content (UGC) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), rather than mainly by official destination marketing. Traditional destination image theories, such as organic and induced image and the cognitive-affective-conative model, are still important. However, these theories were developed when information sources were more stable and clearly separated. They often explain image change as a simple difference between before and after the visit.

Many recent studies show that eWOM has a strong influence on tourists' pre-visit perceptions and travel intentions. However, most of this research treats eWOM as numerical signals, such as positive or negative tone, number of reviews, or ratings. Because of this, it pays less attention to how meaning is created through stories and how destination image changes over time. This limitation is more obvious in cultural heritage tourism because heritage experiences depend strongly on interpretation, symbols, and ideas of authenticity.

This conceptual paper reviews and connects three main research areas: destination image theory, eWOM and social media research, and narrative and social construction perspectives. Based on this review, the paper views eWOM as a form of narrative resource. These online stories help tourists imagine a destination before the visit and shape their expectations about heritage value and authenticity. During the visit, these expectations are confirmed, challenged, or changed through on-site experience. After the visit, tourists often share new stories online. These stories are based on their real experiences and then influence how future tourists imagine the destination. In this way, destination image develops through a continuous narrative process.

The cultural heritage destination of Barcelona and the Chinese social media context are used as an illustrative case. This context is useful because Chinese tourists are highly active on social media, pre-trip storytelling is rich, and post-trip sharing is common. As a result, changes in destination image can be clearly observed as tourists move from online narratives to on-site experiences and back to online sharing.

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Illuminating the Night Economy: Exploring the Role of Night Markets in Phuket's Noctourism Landscape

Global tourism continues to evolve, and travelers are increasingly seeking experiences that extend beyond conventional daytime attractions, giving rise to the growing phenomenon of noctourism. It includes the activities occurring during evening and nighttime hours. Noctourism has emerged as an important dimension of contemporary destination experiences, particularly in tropical regions where climatic comfort and urban vibrancy transform the night into an active tourism landscape. In Thailand's island destination of Phuket, the night-time economy plays a crucial role in shaping visitor experiences, offering an alternative spatial and cultural environment that blends leisure, gastronomy, entertainment, and social interaction. Among the most prominent manifestations of this night tourism culture are the island's vibrant night markets, which serve as focal points of economic exchange, cultural expression, and experiential consumption. This exploratory study will examine the emerging role of noctourism in Phuket by focusing on the experiential, social, and cultural dimensions of night markets as central spaces of night-time tourism activity. The study is aimed at focusing on three well-known markets, which are Chillva Market, Naka Weekend Market, and Patong Night Market, which collectively represent diverse characteristics of Phuket's nocturnal tourism ecosystem. Chillva Market is a contemporary, youth-oriented marketplace characterized by creative container-style retail spaces and live-music atmospheres. Naka Weekend Market is a large traditional bazaar known for its extensive street food offerings, handicrafts, and locally produced goods. Meanwhile, Patong Night Market operates in one of Phuket's most internationally recognized tourism zones, offering a tourism-focused environment where visitors shop, dine, and enjoy evening entertainment. Together, these markets illustrate how noctourism spaces cater to different visitor preferences while contributing to the broader night-time tourism economy. The study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach, drawing on insights gathered from tourists visiting these markets in Phuket. Data would be collected through semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with tourists participating in night-time market activities, enabling an in-depth understanding of their motivations, perceptions, and experiences

of noctourism. Further, observational insights will be used to capture the atmosphere, spatial interactions, and sensory characteristics that define the night market environment. The findings would explain why tourists are strongly drawn to night markets and how the lively ambiance, culinary diversity, and opportunities for evening cultural immersion motivate their revisits. Climatic comfort at night, the convenience of extended activity hours, and the opportunity to combine leisure, dining, and shopping in a single environment will be considered key motivations for participating in nocturnal tourism activities. Night markets function as informal cultural interfaces where tourists encounter elements of everyday Thai life, local creativity, and community interaction. Further, this study would contribute to the growing body of literature on noctourism by highlighting the importance of night markets as experiential tourism spaces within tropical destinations. The study aims to provide insights for tourism planners and stakeholders seeking to enhance Phuket's night-time tourism offerings while fostering culturally authentic and economically inclusive nocturnal tourism environments.

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**Public Policies for Tourism Development:
An Analysis Based on Perception and Economy - Case Study
of the *Pueblos Mágicos* Program in Michoacán, Mexico**

Cultural tourism, related to historic heritage, is a basic activity for the development of cities and locations recognized as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Recently, cultural heritage has taken on a role as a socioeconomic revitalizer and promoter of local development, doing so by its exploitation as a new format of tourism: Cultural tourism. In Mexico, cultural tourism has been exponentially put into practice in the last few decades, becoming a priority for the Mexican Government. In 2001, Mexico, through its Department of Tourism (SECTUR), established the public policy called *Pueblos Mágicos* (Magic Towns) Program, designed to identify towns with unique cultural and physical features that represented the everyday life of each local community. Drawing from this, SECTUR sought to bring both Mexican and international tourists to these sites, reinforcing their touristic visibility and thus improving their economy by promoting local craftworks, gastronomy and trade; in turn, this would help to gather resources to rehabilitate and preserve the towns' representative appearance.

While this policy entailed attractive intentions for the comprehensive development of some least favoured communities, it has resulted in significant alterations of towns deemed as "magic": transformation of economic activities, privileging touristic aspects over sound living conditions for locals, continuous migration, and the physical transformation of the very features that earned towns such distinction. 25 years into its creation, the program has registered 177 towns, 10 of which are located in the State of Michoacán.

This research focuses on two main objectives: First, to analyze the consequences of public policies, such as the *Pueblos Mágicos* Program, on tourism-based regional economy through the inhabitants' perception.

And second, to analyze the economic activities of the selected towns registered by said program. The methodology is based on data collection from sources such as the Mexican National Statistics, Geography and Information Technology Institute (INEGI), economic census, the touristic observatory for *Pueblos Mágicos* and the Department of Tourism, and confront such data with the information obtained by the fieldwork conducted with the inhabitants of the 10 *Pueblos Mágicos* located in Michoacán: Angangueo, Cotija, Cuitzeo, Jiquilpan, Paracho, Pátzcuaro, Santa Clara del Cobre, Tacámbaro, Tlalpujahua and Tzintzuntzan. Finally, we will cross-check the information to identify the current context of touristic activity and local economy, and thereby diagnose the future of cultural tourism in Michoacán by identifying right decisions and areas of improvement.

Brenda M. Romero

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The Resilient Danza de Matachines Ceremonial

This work examines the roles of nationalism and imperialism in corrupting traces of vernacular forms which nonetheless survive. The history of New Mexico (a US state since 1912) in the Southwestern US, has, until recently, been subject to the views of insider (Hispanophile) and outsider (White) scholars who have imposed limited views on the local population of descendants of the Spanish colonists, self-termed “Manitos” (from *hermanitos*, brothers and sisters). The term “Indo-Hispanos,” was used by land grant activist Reyes Tijerina in the 1960s to form a coalition between local Indigenous nations and Manitos (Scordia Pacheco, 2023). The term later circulated in academic writings after New Mexican scholars gathered and discussed the term in the early 1990s. The US reservation system isolated Indigenous societies from the mainstream with Indo-Hispanos living in close proximity to nineteen Indigenous Pueblo, Apache, and Navajo Nation (Diné) municipalities/nations. In addition, early practices of slave holding across cultures with subsequent intermarriages have blurred historical distinctions over time, and this finds relief through Performance. The embodiment of identity through dancing was common to both Western Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous societies of the Americas and this has not changed, in part because the love of dancing in the now-interrelated societies is ancient. The ceremonial Matachines, widely believed to have been imported to the Americas from Western Europe, with iconographic evidence of its roots in Greece around 640 BC, was used in the evangelization process during the sixteenth century. The ceremonial subsequently merged with Indigenous and/or Afro-descendant rituals and dances and spread widely (Romero, 2025). The early history of Matachines—today common in New Mexico, Mexico, and Colombia as in other locations in the Americas—is shrouded in mystery in part because the documentation of vernacular street/outdoor performances was not viable in imperialist societies. Thus, the only historical versions that survive were linked to the Golden Age of Theater in Spain. In addition, possible connections with Arabic cultures were largely erased from Spanish history books by the 1650s. In Mexico, where hundreds of Matachines/Matlachines troupes dance, the Spanish conquistadors burned the libraries of the ruling Mexica (Aztecs), erasing possible histories of Mexican antecedents. The presenter discusses the ancient roots and delves into multiple cultural narratives that account for

the etymology of the term “matachines” and other versions across the Americas and in the European past. Conclusions assert that societies are creative in the ways they incorporate outside perspectives into the performing arts, allowing for conflict and resolution.

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Information Design: Mapping Ancient Greece and the Challenge of Diachronicity

The cartographic tradition of mapping the Hellenic world is ancient and provides a rich foundation for historical understanding. This paper presents an information design project, 23 years in development, that seeks to complement existing resources by addressing the specific challenge of representing the diachronic nature of settlements. By necessity, map information is usually presented in a synchronic view, which can obscure the fluctuating existence and importance of sites – such as Mycenae, a Bronze Age power but a minor village in the Classical era. This project aims to create a comprehensive map that visually articulates these crucial temporal shifts.

The project's methodology is rooted in two principles: rigorous data verification and expert information design. Drawing on 40 years of design and academic experience, the project addresses cartographic discrepancies by verifying each of its over 1700 locations against a minimum of three authoritative sources.

The primary innovation is a novel graphic device: the "timemark." This hexagonal placemark simultaneously encodes a location's geographic status (known or approximate) and its relative historical influence (major or minor) across six discrete periods: Stone Age, Bronze Age, Dark/Archaic Era, Classical Era, Hellenistic Age, and the Roman period. This system allows users to instantly perceive the rise and fall of settlements over millennia.

Beyond site-specific data, the map re-integrates the physical landscape's role in historical development. It uniquely charts primary land and sea routes in the context of prevailing directional winds (such as the Etesian winds), which were critical factors in establishing trade.

A key challenge in modern cartography is conveying a tangible sense of distance. To address this, the Ancient Greece map introduces a "human scale" metric. This system visualizes practical distances, such as the limit of visibility, a day's journey on foot or horseback, and a day's sail. This device makes the geography, particularly the proximity of islands in the Aegean, immediately comprehensible in human terms rather than as abstract units of measure.

To ensure longevity and broad accessibility, the project eschews high-maintenance databases in favor of "evergreen" formats (PDF, PNG)

and is provided for free at <https://ancient-greece.org/maps/map-of-ancient-greece/>. This work demonstrates a synthesis of rigorous historical methodology and human-centric information design to provide new clarity on the movements and relationships of the ancient world.

Anusara Sawangchai

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From Vacation to Workation: Transforming Phuket into a Digital Nomad Hu

The rapid expansion of remote work and digital technologies has transformed the way individuals engage with travel and professional life. In recent years, the concept of workation has emerged as a hybrid form of mobility in which individuals combine professional responsibilities with leisure travel. This shift has contributed to the rise of digital nomads, a growing group of professionals who rely on digital infrastructure to work remotely while residing temporarily in different destinations. As a result, tourism destinations around the world are increasingly exploring strategies to attract this emerging segment of long-stay travelers. This conceptual study examines the potential transformation of Phuket from a traditional vacation destination into a digital nomad hub within the evolving landscape of workation tourism. The study aims to explore the conceptual foundations of workation and analyze how tourism destinations can adapt to the needs of remote professionals. By synthesizing insights from the existing literature on tourism development, digital nomadism, and remote work mobility, the paper discusses the attributes that help destinations attract digital nomad communities. Particular attention is given to factors such as digital infrastructure, co-working environments, accommodation options, lifestyle quality, and supportive destination ecosystems that enable individuals to maintain productivity while experiencing travel. Phuket is considered a relevant case due to its established tourism infrastructure, international accessibility, appealing lifestyle, and growing digital connectivity. Traditionally recognized as one of Thailand's leading leisure tourism destinations, Phuket possesses several characteristics that align with the preferences of remote workers and digital nomads seeking extended stays. The study discusses how integrating tourism amenities into professional work environments could help Phuket diversify its tourism market and position itself within the global network of workation destinations. The paper also highlights theoretical and practical implications related to the transformation of tourism destinations in the digital era. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the evolving relationship between tourism, work, and lifestyle mobility. From a practical perspective, the study suggests that investments in digital infrastructure, development of co-working spaces, flexible accommodation arrangements, and supportive policy

frameworks may strengthen Phuket's attractiveness for digital nomads. Overall, the study provides conceptual insights into how established tourism destinations may adapt to changing travel behaviors and the growing demand for workation experiences in the contemporary global tourism environment.

David Philip Wick

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**Arts, Artifice, Therapy & the Performative Destination -
Pergamon: A Few Glimpses of "Build" and "Showcase" in
the Rise of the Ancient Mediterranean's First "Destination"
Arts, Resort and University Town**

The earliest 'destination' cities of ancient Greece formed organically, Athens and Corinth by trade, Athens as well by a unique coincidence of survival in the Persian Wars and as an active customer under Perikles of non-Athenian (and especially non-Greek) culture and knowledge. The competition after Alexander's death produced a motley of new 'destinations,' but one truly unique achievement came out of the the conquest of the Pergamum fortress and design of a new city there as a groundbreaking innovation - Philetarios (and his adopted son Eumenes) used what was essentially the last amassed payment gold from Alexander's armies after his death to conceive a new planned pseudo-polis and capital that would be both a destination resort for the elites (combining the embryo of the 'resort' concept with therapy center (like Epidauros, Delphi, Kos), AND a destination college/university for the children of the new Hellenistic urban management class, a concept competing with Alexandria (though the educational approach differed in each case).

The hybrid idea would require an elite urban set of showcases for the arts, a library, and a 'identity style' and that seems to have come either from the hiring of Aristotle's 'Peripatetic School' heir from Athens as consultant (or even briefly head of school) or his from own protege Neleus, and with those hirings, the movement (almost the theft?) of a major portion of Aristotle's library as well as senior students and artists. Near, but not in, Pergamum, the new campus library, the spectacular cliff-side theater, the health-center complex appeared up on the freshly created resort/city's acropolis. Over time, as the school and city prospered, the art squares and shrines, theater, and library (like the brilliant features of the resort) calcified into an elites-only destination, suffered negative reactions among its student population (the least connected to the resort elites, and attracted the attention of predators, suffering a slowdown in revenues. By the last century of the old era a local warlord coveted special scientific works in the library, and the revenue of what was left of the regime to fund his insurgencies in Anatolia. A new welfare system developed by the Gracchi in the Roman

Republic wanted the same. Both exploited the “style disconnect” (and social isolation) of the elites from the local population.

In the 80s of the Republic's last century Pergamon was destroyed in a series of aggressive moves by the Anatolian warlord Mithridates and the Roman renegade Sulla, and a notorious antiquities (including MSS) smuggler and pirate named Apellicon snatched what was left of the showcase art and library for resale only to have the treasure hoard fall into Sulla's hands. The last of the library's story followed Sulla and his return to the west to attack his own culture.

The key here (and the link to the threat art and performances in public, public libraries and historic archives and sites face today) has to do with the tendency great collections of information have to be monetized and converted by business or power players to saleable goods, or brokered so that only politically or financially convenient heritage art is put within reach. Accessible public heritage arts (whether ornamenting a living or working space, home of public, or as books in a library) are any shared culture's irreplaceable medium of culture-rooted growth, and when free to access as a part of open education, this role becomes even more critical.

Luis Xarez

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Why Should Dance Resist Being Turned into a Sport?

The presence of Breaking Dance at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and the existence of regular Ballroom Dance competitions through the World DanceSport Federation are signs that dance, or at least a part of it, can be seduced by the sports model. This model is attractive in terms of media visibility and consequent fundraising through advertising. In a sample of 500 university students of Sports Science, more than ninety percent had never attended a theatrical dance performance, and more than seventy percent of them consider dance to be just another sport!

The trend of turning most physical activities of human kinetics into sports had to reach dance, after having done the same in other initially non-sporting activities, such as athletics (marching, running, throwing or jumping), nature exploration (swimming, canoeing or mountain climbing), acrobatic or circus arts (gymnastics) or martial arts (judo, karate or taekwondo), transforming them into Olympic modalities.

This process began, in the case of dance, with hybrid models, usually called *aesthetic sports* (rhythmic gymnastics, figure skating and synchronized swimming), that is, Olympic sports that approached dance to evolve. And in this process of having an artistic note along with the technical note, professional choreographers began to be required, which naturally led to the integration of technical skills from classical and contemporary dance into the choreographies of these three *aesthetic sports*.

The next step consisted and consists of this phenomenon that we call the *sportification* of dance itself, turning some of its idioms into sporting modalities. In the three largest genres, Theatrical Dances, Street Dances and Ballroom Dances, competitive frameworks are becoming more and more frequent. Ballroom Dances were the first to give in and changed their name to DanceSport, Breaking had its Olympic experience in 2024 and in Theatrical Dance competitions such as the Prix de Lausanne (International Ballet Competition), basically follow the sporting model, which involves, among other things, the awarding of medals to competitors.

Therefore, it seems to us the right time to reflect on the similarities (physical activity), but also the big differences between dance and sport. Caillois (1958) defines play as a free and voluntary activity that takes place in a pure space, isolated and protected from the rest of life. This characteristic of play may be common to both, but they differ in the type

of play: *Agôn* (competition) for sports, *Mimicry* (simulation or role play) for dance. Not every game needs to be competitive, much less a sport.

For reasons of greater visibility in contemporary societies, should dance move closer to the sports model (competitions) or remain within the universe of performing arts? Should dancers be considered athletes or performers? Should obligatory, stereotyped figures overcome the freedom of artistic creation? What is gained and what is lost with this transformation of dance into a sport?

On the 2028 Olympic Games to be held in Los Angeles (USA), the proposal of new disciplines (baseball, cricket, and others) no longer includes Breaking, which will have its only Olympic experience in Paris. A good sign that the *sportification* of *Breaking* was no more than a fortuitous episode. Apart from its consolidated participation in the opening and closing ceremonies, dance will always be out of place in the Olympic Games. Rules, medals, and trophies don't fit well within the body of dance, its history, and its essence.

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How Do Flexible Norms Achieve Effectiveness for Sensitive Personal Information Governance in Tourism Big Data Commercialization?

The burgeoning commercialization of tourism big data presents a critical paradox that sensitive personal information (SPI) constitutes both a highly valuable economic asset and a significant risk focal point. The limitations of the traditional rigid protection model, for example, laws and regulations with mandatory clauses become amplified in tourism scenarios when addressing the aforementioned challenges. Flexible norms, represented by soft law and characterized by voluntary compliance from participants, offer advantages in terms of flexibility during formulation and adjustment. However, flexible governance norms inherently face the challenge of effectiveness due to their lack of coercive power. Unlike traditional rigid rules, which rely on strict rights-obligations frameworks supported by corresponding legal liabilities, the flexible governance norms governing tourism big data lack such institutional backing. Understanding how these norms function holds practical significance for regulating the application of tourism big data. This paper aims to compare representative flexible governance norms for tourism big data governance in China, analyzing which institutions or mechanisms within these norms effectively exert binding force on participants, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of flexible governance norms for tourism big data.

By comparing 12 representative flexible norms issued by different formulating entities – examining their formulation backgrounds, specific contents, supporting measures, and other attributes – we found that flexible norms often require the establishment of a series of internal and external mechanisms to constrain participants. Although they lack the mandatory clauses inherent in rigid rules, these mechanisms can still urge practitioners to participate prudently in the governance of tourism big data in accordance with regulatory requirements. Analysis of existing flexible norms in this domain – ranging from national and provincial/city guidelines to industry standards and corporate policies – reveals core, interlinked mechanisms driving effectiveness: Role-Driven Mechanisms, Content-Driven Mechanisms and Execution-Driven Mechanisms.

Role-Driven Mechanisms (Initiators, implementers and Oversight Committees) define the functions and responsibilities assigned to

different actors within the governance structure, operationalizing the "toolkit" of flexible norms. Content-Driven Mechanisms (Internal Benefit-Cost Alignment Rule Design, etc.) focus on ensuring the substantive rules within flexible norms are practical, credible, and incentivize compliance. Execution-Driven Mechanisms (Public Commitments, Target Guarantee Measures and Pressure Transmission Measures) translate the principles and norms into concrete actions and ensure accountability throughout the implementation process.

This article innovatively operationalizes W. Richard Scott's theory to analyze and design practical SPI governance mechanisms. The identified Role-Content-Execution mechanism triad provides a concrete, implementable framework for stakeholders, moving beyond theoretical principles to actionable steps for building SPI resilience. This article also establishes flexible norms, powered by the synergistic triple-driver model, as the essential cornerstone for achieving both robust SPI protection and responsible data commercialization in the future of tourism. While the identified mechanisms offer a robust framework, future research must critically examine their complex interactions, relative effectiveness across different contexts, and the evolving role of complementary hard law in reinforcing this essential flexible governance infrastructure.

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