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Bibliometric analysis on cultural tourism and depopulation in rural areas

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Abstract

Today, tourism has had to readapt itself to the global circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, it has had to reorient itself and find new lines of investigation. Cultural tourism, a by-product of this situation, has found the rural environment to be the ideal setting for its growing development. In this paper, bibliometric and scientometric studies are used to analyse the scientific output in the field of research on cultural tourism and its repercussions for rural areas, linking it to depopulation. This is a novel research project in that it analyses all scientific output using the Web of Science (WoS) platform, owned by Clarivate Analytics, as a database. The tool chosen to construct and visualise the data was the VOSviewer software, based on a time frame that spans the last twenty years (2002-2022). Thus, the evolution of all publication and citation records has been assessed and analysed. Likewise, the most important publications and most noteworthy authors, affiliations and countries have been identified. Finally, the study expounds that emerging themes are growing every year at an exponential rate.

Keywords: Bibliometrics; cultural tourism; rural; pandemic; depopulation.

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Análisis bibliométrico sobre el turismo cultural y despoblación en el ámbito rural

Resumen

Actualmente el turismo ha tenido que readaptarse a las circunstancias mundiales producidas por la pandemia del covid-19. Provocando que deba reorientarse y buscar, por consiguiente, nuevas líneas de investigación. Producto de ello, el turismo cultural ha encontrado en el ámbito rural el escenario perfecto para su creciente desarrollo. Los estudios bibliométricos y cuantitativos analizan en este trabajo cual es la producción científica que se está desarrollando en el campo de investigación sobre el turismo cultural y su repercusión en ámbito rural, ligándolo a la despoblación. Conformándose como una investigación novedosa, puesto que analiza toda la producción científica usando como base de datos Web of Science (WoS) propiedad Clarivate Analytics. La herramienta que se ha escogido para construir y visualizar los datos ha sido el software VOSviewer, teniendo en cuenta un marco cronológico que abarca los últimos veinte años (2002-2022). De este modo, se ha evaluado y contrastado la evolución del total de las publicaciones y citas registradas. Así como, se han identificado cuáles han sido los títulos de publicaciones más importantes, autores, afiliaciones y países más destacados. Por lo que este estudio descubre que se trata de temáticas emergentes que crecen cada año a un ritmo exponencial.

Palabras clave: Bibliometría, turismo cultural, rural, pandemia, despoblación.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that tourism has had to be reoriented in search of new lines of investigation that correspond to this crucial moment that is unfolding (Li, Nguyen & Coca-Stefaniak, 2020; Jeon & Yang, 2021; Joo et al., 2021; Škare, Riberio & Porada-Rochoñ, 2021; Sharma, Thomas & Paul, 2021; Sobaih et al., 2021; Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021). Among the themes linked with tourism and the pandemic, the rural environment has been directly affected (Moreno-Luna et al., 2021), as it provides a space in which the required healthcare measures can be more reasonably implemented (Zavarika, 2021). Undoubtedly, this reorientation of tourism has caused rural tourism to become one of the main drivers of development (Oleksenko et al., 2021), linked to sustainability (Polukhina et al., 2021).

Likewise, one of the biggest beneficiaries, its activity being connected

with the rural environment, has been cultural tourism, which makes cultural heritage a new driver, not just economically, but also socially (Peinado, 2012), helping to develop rural areas (Gómez-Ullate et al., 2020), and transform them (Vidickienė, Vilkė & Gedminaitė-Raudonė, 2020). But this is only the case if this kind of tourism is carried out responsibly ensuring minimal environmental impact (Conforti, González & Endere, 2014). In this regard, the International Cultural Tourism Charter (International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], 1999), defends the irreplaceable nature of each community's cultural heritage. However, its importance as an economic and educational resource is undeniable.

The aim of this research is to link the scientific output on cultural tourism with a time frame during which it has been overwhelmingly influenced, as is the case for the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to add a specific space, which is the rural

environment. Hence, the first three issues addressed in this study are: the reorientation of tourism in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism in sparsely populated regions and cultural tourism based on cultural heritage. Bibliometric analysis is used to extract the data that define the scientific output on cultural tourism.

The methodology that has been applied to observe the scientific impact (Merigó, Gil-Lafuente & Yager, 2015; Llanos-Herrera & Merigo, 2018) generated by cultural tourism has been extracted from the database of the Web of Science (WoS) platform, owned by Clarivate Analytics, with the aim of standardising the information obtained by using a single source. Likewise, for the analysis of the data, VOSviewer has been used as a software tool for the data's construction and visualisation. To that end, the broad framework that covers the tourism sector has been limited in the time frame from January 2020 to June 2022.

The analysis of the bibliometric study creates a multidisciplinary map as a result of the extensive scientific output on cultural tourism linked with depopulation. This has required ordering, documenting and interpreting the information resulting from the entire scientometric analysis process. A series of tools have been developed to this end, based on graphs and charts that show the evolution of publication and citation records and on charts that bring together the ten top positions in a ranking that shows the volume of records by publication titles, authors, academic affiliations and countries.

1. Reorienting tourism in view of the covid-19 pandemic

Based on the studies carried out to understand the tourism industry in the context of Covid-19, the different determinants have been analysed that can restimulate development in the sector (Škare et al., 2021). Here, governments, market stakeholders, technological innovations and labour market

stimulation are all factors that determine how tourism develops and its sustainable evolution following the pandemic (Collins-Kreiner & Ram, 2020). Furthermore, small-scale factors are also conducive to the development of sustainable tourism (Sharma et al., 2021).

The major impact of Covid-19 on tourism can be seen especially in planned behaviours, since after the pandemic these have been undertaken by the residents themselves (Altuntas & Gok, 2021). Their increased sensitivity leads to a kind of emotional solidarity that encourages them to travel and support the hotel and restaurant sector within their own territory, turning local residents into tourists in their own environment (Joo et al., 2021). In the knowledge that this is one of the sectors worst hit by the pandemic, this sensitivity can be perceived in the behaviour of the reoriented tourist (Suárez-Ponce et al., 2022).

For this reason, it is important to take into account the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), and, in particular: people's attitudes and travelling intentions (Li et al., 2020). This new scenario of a "perceived risk", brought about by the pandemic, can help us to understand how travellers perceive the risk to then be able to offer relevant solutions, in expectation of changes in travel behaviour that require responses from governments, in order to improve traveller confidence and support their decision-making process.

Both the quantitative and qualitative results show that travel decision-making is largely influenced by the confidence in the local government's information on personal safety, since non-official communication from TV programs or social media have a negative impact on those tourists who decide to go ahead with their travel plans. In this regard, the managers of hotel businesses and travel management organisations can help when it comes to better understanding tourists' responses to Covid-19, with a view to possible future outbreaks (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021).

In terms of Spanish national tourism, the negative impact of Covid-19 is considerably

high. This reduction may be compensated in part by the reorientation of outbound tourism towards the national-local travel market, sustained largely by residents that decide to be tourists in their own territory, thereby respecting the mobility limitations caused by the pandemic. However, this negative impact will not be homogenous across the regions of Spain (Arbulú et al., 2021).

In the reorientation of tourism, a territory's internal demand has depended on its resident population choosing to develop local tourism (Moreno-Luna et al., 2021). This change in the perspective of tourists led to an avoidance of mass tourism destinations in favour of more family-based, less populated and more trustworthy places. The evolution of national tourism in Spain implies a kind of recovery that favours a change in the tourism development model, focusing more on sustainable proposals that are less intensive and which have a lower impact on the population and the environment.

This new "era of tourism" more critically involves regions where until now "sun and beach" mass tourism has prevailed. In essence, the impact of the pandemic has been greater in regions with higher infection rates, and these coincide with the regions that are most dependent on tourist flows. Those regions that have invested in developing rural and alternative tourism, supporting, for example, rural accommodation options and campsites, have not been as hard hit (Sobaih et al., 2021).

There are results that help to understand the structure of local tourism networks, both on a visual and quantitative level, bearing in mind the repercussions of the pandemic (Silva, 2021). It also serves as useful basic information for putting in place regional tourism policies in response to infectious diseases, such as Covid-19 (Jeon & Yang, 2021). This evidence must take into account the plans and strategies of tourism. This kind of tourism generates high levels of benefits and enables those involved to maintain the physical separation distance required during this health crisis. Sustainability will be a fundamental part of this development,

its three essential pillars being: environmental, social and economic (Polukhina et al., 2021).

2. Tourism in sparsely populated areas

Rural development that promotes tourist activities can help to mitigate territories' depopulation (Bustos, 2016; Alamá-Sabater et al., 2019; López-Sanz et al., 2021), aided by the concept of sustainability (Battino & Lampreu, 2019). It is, therefore, of vital importance to first create a series of policies to protect against depopulation (De Almeida, 2017; Delgado, 2019) which are underpinned by the three pillars of sustainability (Sánchez-Mesa, 2019). There are a number of international institutions such as: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Landscape Convention, the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), among others; which have applied measures to preserve traditional landscapes (Collantes & Pinilla, 2019), in the understanding that this is a key factor for sustainability (Lasanta et al., 2017).

Of course, it was predicted that there would be an increase in the demand for national travel, in view of the difficulties in travelling abroad after the Covid-19 pandemic. However, rural tourism with qualitative services below the level of its post-pandemic quantitative growth has been exceeded (Silva, 2021), with rural tourism being seen as a typology that is curative, nature-friendly, family-focused, welcoming and which can include animal-watching experiences and trekking (Coros et al., 2021).

When applied to the countryside, through empirical investigation, it was found that tourists who visit rural areas look for a safe rural environment in collective facilities like rural experience centres, as well as in food and accommodation providers (Chanwon & Jaemoon, 2021). After being shut inside in poorly ventilated apartments, fresh air and green spaces become central priorities for tourists, ahead of the traditional sunbathing

and beach time. The availability of wi-fi in hotels became of less importance following the imposition of teleworking. Remote spots with beautiful views, large spaces where you can walk away from crowds of people, became a priority, together with the possibility of breathing pure air (Zavarika, 2021).

The European Union (EU) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), define rural tourism as tourist activities in the countryside. Nilsson (2002), considered agritourism, farm tourism and rural tourism in remote areas to be rural tourism. Bramwell (1994), suggested that rural tourism should be a small-scale operation that links closely with nature in rural areas. Health tourism was in keeping with society's needs after the pandemic and is an important direction for future development.

However, the fragility of rural tourism was also cause for concern. Therefore, improving the construction of infrastructure and service quality became a requirement for the modernisation of rural tourism (Li et al., 2021). To further develop agritourism (Lupi et al., 2017), digital technologies employed in the tourist industry must be updated and their format changed so that they are competitive even after Covid-19.

Requirements to be met for this to happen are: mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the crisis in rural employment during the pandemic; support the development of sustainable national and regional agritourism (Melendez-Pastor et al., 2014); diversify the use of creative technologies to improve competitiveness and the efficiency of their resources; strengthen sustainable development and the local economy (López & Pardo, 2018); promote the continued employment of both local residents and migrant employees, who help to maintain stable population levels (Bayona & Carrasco & Gil-Alonso, 2013); foster confidence by ensuring protection and safety in all tourist activities; ensure inclusive accessibility for all kinds of transport (Št'astná & Vaishar, 2017); and guarantee social collaboration between the state, businesses and civil society (Oleksenko et al., 2021). Finally,

as consequence of the covid-19 pandemic, a phenomenon of growing importance has created in rural development: cultural tourism.

3. Cultural tourism based on cultural heritage

Culture and tourism were two of the fastest growing industries of the 20th century and, towards the end of the century, the combination of these two sectors in "cultural tourism" had become of the more desirable development options for countries and regions throughout the world (Richards, 2011; 2018). For this reason, the rise of transformative cultural tourism as an innovative kind of tourism should be given special attention in rural development policies (Vidickienė et al., 2020). A people's cultural heritage is made up of:

The works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. (UNESCO, 1982, p. 40)

Heritage essentially represents the identity of a people or a social group (Lowenthal, 1996). Its conservation and preservation so that it remains authentic (Tian et al., 2020), is undertaken with a purely social intention (Prats, 2000). These testimonies of the past will serve as conveyors of their history to future generations (Endere, 2000; 2009), since they comprise, the material remains that can be studied using archaeological methodology and because of all the information that can be obtained through such investigation.

In the 1990, International Council on Cultural Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) charter on archaeological heritage reaffirmed the idea that this heritage is

formed by limited and non-renewable cultural resources; which it describes as of public interest, hence the need for it to be protected by each country's legislation. It also affirms that the presentation to the broader public of archaeological heritage is vital for its promotion and for people to understand the need for its protection (ICOMOS, 1990). The safeguarding of cultural heritage has been addressed from a more social perspective (Salazar, González & Macias, 2020), to which the concept of sustainability can be added (Cantar, Endere & Zulaica, 2021). A milestone in this regard were the conclusions of the Nara Conference (UNESCO, 1994).

This is the context in which so-called "cultural tourism" has developed. Certain attitudes, beliefs, ideas, values and perceptions of people who practise such a kind of tourism can be observed (Martín-Ruiz, Castellanos-Verdugo & Oviedo-García, 2010; Adie & Hall, 2017; Liang et al., 2021), as well as their behaviour patterns and lifestyles (Richards, 2000). The International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS, 1999), upholds the irreplaceable nature of each community's cultural heritage, believing the essence of its identity to be the key to defining its culture, which is what has given rise to the interest of the cultural tourist (Zhang et al., 2020).

But at the same time, it stresses its importance as an economic and educational resource (Rodríguez & Pérez, 2021), always bearing in mind the need to preserve the integrity and intensify the protection of cultural resources from the impact of tourism, to the benefit of future generations (Conforti et al., 2014). It also states the need for cultural tourism's promotion and dissemination in order to make it more attractive, both on social media (Mele, Kerkhof & Cantoni, 2021), and in the media, and for the focus to be not only from an educational perspective, but also considering its entertainment value (Sanagustín-Fons, Tobar-Pesántez & Ravina-Ripoll, 2020).

Cultural heritage, ultimately, is seen as a driver of social and economic development (Peinado, 2012; Mesía-Montenegro, 2021; Wei, Liu & Park, 2021), and specifically archaeological heritage (Martín-Bueno & Luesma, 2006), combines the educational part with the social-economic one (Espeso-Molinero, 2019). To corroborate this, it is firstly important to understand the reality of archaeological sites as tourism resources (Manzato, 2007), which can also innovate to ensure the tourist experience is as complete (Almobaideen, Allan & Saadeh, 2016), as when they are located in rural areas, their activity being linked with rural tourism in a sustainable way and actively participating in the area's rural development (Fernandez, 2017).

The sun and beach model of tourism has been complemented with other markets focused on culture and nature, which look to provide sensations in unique and distinctive settings (Viken, Höckert & Grimwood, 2021). The latter represents a great value that must be measure by joining qualitative concepts like experience, satisfaction, and the experiences that tourists have when contemplating and enjoying (Vena-Oya et al., 2021), history from archaeological remains. The main motivation for visiting these kinds of places has been the search for memorable experiences that distract, educate and entertain (Recuero, Blasco & García, 2011).

Also serving as a crucial influence on the influx of users (Cuomo et al., 2021), and in attracting them to these kinds of places (Chen & Rahman, 2018; Ercolano, Gaeta & Parenti, 2018), are factors such as facilities, the availability of temporary exhibitions, activities that help to bring this cultural heritage to life (Gonçalves, Seabra & Silva, 2018; Hernández-Mogollón, Duarte & Folgado-Fernández, 2018; Mareque, De Prada & Álvarez-Díaz, 2021), technology capable of enriching the experience (Caciora et al., 2021), natural wealth and the proximity to other tourist products (Petit & Seetaram, 2019).

These are all desirable as long as they do not lead to an uncontrolled and massive influx of users (Wallace, 2013; Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2020; Li & Du, 2021) and if they affect not only the visitor's experience (Lee & Jan, 2019), but also the sustainability of the environment (García, 2001; García, De la Calle & Mínguez, 2011).

4. Methodology

This bibliometric study follows the methodology proposed by Llanos-Herrera & Merigó (2018), which examines publications, citations and sources (Merigó et al., 2015), and develops according to a systematisation of information by category, such as document titles, authors, academic affiliations and even countries. This kind of analysis comprises a scientometric proposal, in which numerous researchers have specialised, relating information of great importance that reveals the state of scientific and academic output, the volume being generated and its spatiotemporal interrelationship.

In this regard, this research has been focused on the data obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) platform, owned by Clarivate Analytics, with the aim of standardising the information obtained following a single source, which is why other databases have not been considered, such as SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) or SCOPUS. The impartiality of the data under analysis provides an objective view of the current state of the different fields of study and research.

The time frame chosen for this is the last twenty years: 2002-2022, during which only publications of articles and review articles have been considered. Having addressed in the previous sections the importance of the aforementioned topics, it is now necessary to look into how scientific output reflects the

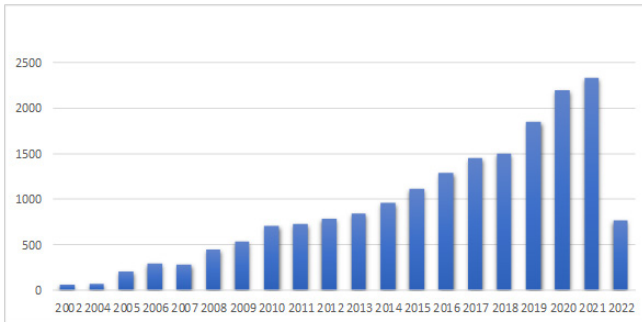
relevance of the situation of cultural tourism, an area to which highly specific contexts are added, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on sparsely populated areas, and particularly on those suffering from depopulation.

5. Results and discussion

After the analysis, the process was initiated to extract results based on the information found on WoS at the beginning of June 2022, considering both the number of articles and citations of each of the selected documents. It is useful to find out the publications with the highest number of records, the authors, affiliations and countries that are developing the scientific output we are interested in for the purposes of this study. After collecting all the information, a two-dimensional map analysis was undertaken. These maps draw out a clear structure on the selected scientific output, which brings together the two subjects of: cultural tourism, in contexts of depopulation. This data comparison reveals an extraordinary panorama.

5.1. "Cultural tourism"

After considering the study's methodology, analysis is undertaken of the scientific output on cultural tourism, an area for which WoS has up to 18,455 publication records. Evidence of the volume of scientific output of publications can be seen in Graph I, which shows growing and ascending records on WoS. From 2002 to 2021 the volume has steadily risen at a growth rate of 3,728%, showing that this topic continues to create impact in current research, as, despite the pandemic of the last three years (2019-2021), it still grew by 26%.



Source: Own elaboration, 2022 with data obtained from Web of Science.

Graph I: Evolution of the number of publications on cultural tourism

Table 1, below, reveals the ten publications that have the most records of participation in scientific output on cultural tourism over the last twenty years (January

2002 - June 2022), as well as a list of the authors that have conducted most research into this area, their academic affiliations and origins.

Table 1
Ranking of the top 10 positions in scientific output on Cultural Tourism

TOP	Publication titles	Number of records	Authors	Number of records	Affiliations	Number of records	countries	Number of records
1	Pasos Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural	827	Timothy DJ	64	League of European Research Universities Leru	397	USA	2690
2	Sustainability	683	Kim S	55	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	239	Peoples R China	1997
3	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	404	Xu HG	42	University of Macerata	226	Spain	1834
4	Tourism and Cultural Change	373	Ryan C	39	State University System of Florida	208	England	1468
5	Tourism Management	308	Lopez-Guzman T	38	Griffith University	183	Australia	1346
6	Current Issues in Tourism	238	Frost W	36	Sun Yat Sen University	182	Italy	1324
7	Journal of Heritage Tourism	229	Wall G	35	University of North Carolina	167	Brazil	648
8	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	226	Cynarski Wj	32	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Cnrs	159	Turkey	640
9	Annals of Tourism Research	213	Laing J	32	Chinese Academy of Sciences	154	Canada	602
10	Tourism Geographies	149	Wang Y	29	University of London	152	Portugal	546

Source: Own elaboration, 2022 with data obtained from Web of Science.

A ranking has been produced which includes the following publications in the top three positions of journals: In first place, “Pasos Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural” with 827 records (edited by the Instituto Universitario de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales de la Universidad de La Laguna -España- and the Instituto Universitário da Maia -Portugal-). In second place, “Sustainability” with 683 records (edited by The Canadian Urban Transit Research & Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC) and International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction (CIB). In third place, “Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change” with 404 records (edited by Taylor and Francis Ltd.).

The top three authors from the Chart 1 are: Dallen J. Timothy, with 64 records (from Arizona State University, Sch Community Resources & Dev PHOENIX, AZ, USA), the list continues with Sangkyun Kim, with 55 records (from Edith Cowan University, in Australia), and the third place is occupied by Honggang Xu with 42 records (from Anhui Medical University, Dept. Orthoped, in Hefei, Peoples R. China).

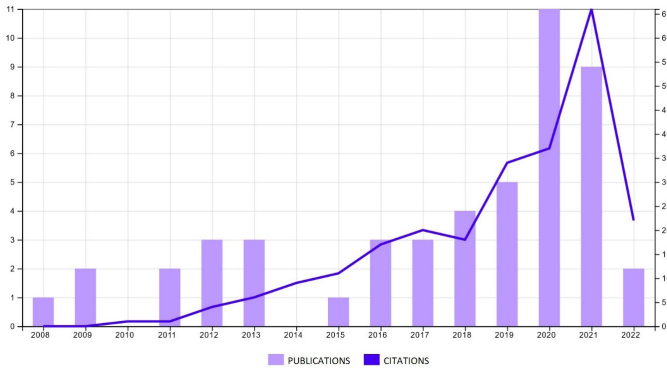
As for the affiliation with the highest number of records: in first place there is the “League of European Research Universities LERU” with 397 records; in second place is the “Hong Kong Polytechnic University” with 239 records; and, in third place, the “University of Macerata” in Italy, with 226 records. In this regard, the countries that have generated the

most scientific output with respect to cultural tourism are the U.S.A, with 2,690 records, R. China with 1,997 records and Spain with 1,834 records. This ranking clearly shows us the top ten positions in terms of the volume of records as regards the scientific output found on WoS on “cultural tourism”.

5.2. “Cultural tourism” and “Depopulation”

The bringing together of the terms “Cultural Tourism” and “Depopulation” began to take on relevance as of 2008. The study encompasses the last twenty years (2002-2022). However, it was not until 2008 that it really began to generate data. The definitive rise interestingly, took place in 2020 with 11 publications and 37 citations. The pandemic and reorientation of tourism towards rural areas clearly affected this kind of scientific output, which began to consider sparsely populated areas, looking to develop the rural environment through tourism, and, more specifically, through cultural tourism.

Depopulation, therefore, is incorporated into a subject that joins cultural tourism and rural tourism in a shared context, which is that of depopulation. In 2021, the number of publications remained significant, but above all with the increase in citations, as can be seen in Graph II, with 9 publications and 66 citations.

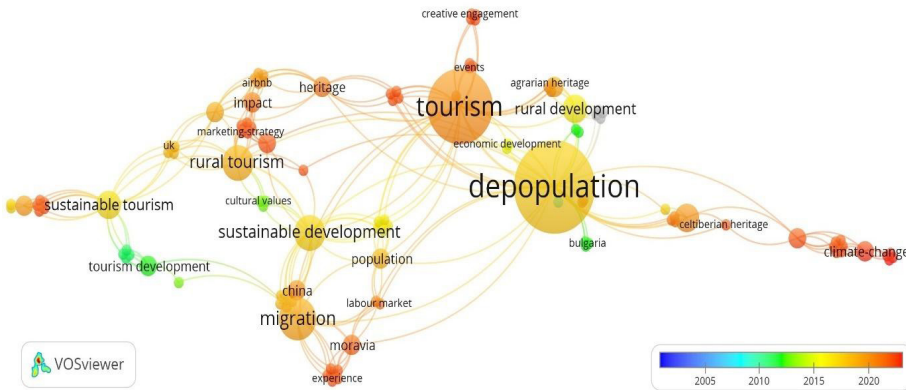


Source: Own elaboration, 2022 with data obtained from Web of Science.

Graph II: Evolution of the number of publications and citations on “cultural tourism” and “depopulation”

If terms and keywords are analysed through VOSviewer, it may be concluded that around “Cultural Tourism” and “Depopulation” research topics have been generated chronologically. For this analysis, Figure I is taken into account, in which themes appear directly related to this combined subject. From 2002 to 2014, approximately, surrounding topics (in green)

are generated, such as: “Tourism development” and “cultural values”, and “Bulgaria” is named. This reveals interesting aspects from the first publications, such as giving cultural value to the rural environment and the need to develop this through tourism. In these studies, no generic reference is made to areas or regions, but rather the focus is on countries.



Source: Own elaboration, 2022 with data obtained from Web of Science.

Figure I: Chromatic and chronological evolution on the research topics that have been generated around the research topics on “cultural tourism” and “depopulation”

From 2015 to 2017, approximately, in yellow-orange, new topics appear linked with cultural tourism and depopulation, such as “sustainable development”, “sustainable tourism”, “rural development” and “economic development”, and it is now that the topic of “depopulation” begins to be addressed directly, due to its relevance. These terms show us the interest at that moment in time for linking these kinds of topics, such as economic and rural “development” with a kind of tourism to which the concept of sustainability is starting to be applied.

During the period 2018-2019, denoted using orange in the Figure I, the topics that are added to the publications take on a marked social component, such as that of “migration”. Due to it deals with depopulation, it is inherent to the social part. Likewise, terms stand out like “rural tourism”, “UK”, “population”, “agrarian heritage”, “airbnb” and “tourism”. Publications, besides containing research on cultural tourism and depopulation, add topics that concern the rural space developed through tourism based on its agrarian heritage.

At the same time, aspects are attributed to it that are of concern to populations, specific countries like the United Kingdom, and a specific kind of accommodation offer can be seen, which is Airbnb. Interestingly, during the period 2019-2022, words appear that refer directly to “experience”, “the labour market”, “marketing strategy”, “impact”, “events”, “creative engagement”, “climate change”, and specific spaces begin to be named, such as: “Moravia”, “China”, and even “celtiberian heritage”.

These are concepts and topics that reaffirm the development power of tourism as a resource measured by its impact, after considering a business strategy that

contributes to the development of the labour market. However, topics and terms are also added that bring with them new implications such as climate change and the importance of experience in tourism, hence the addition of creative engagement and event creation. These terms reveal how new spaces appear within the discourse of cultural tourism in areas with depopulation, such as China as a country, Moravia as a region, and celtiberian heritage as a specific area.

Ultimately, it is the topics linked with rural development, both economic and sustainable, that are relevant, which help to alleviate the problem of depopulation and, at the same time, the negative effects that concern the environment, such as climate change. Also, research topics linked with cultural and heritage value are added that help to enhance business strategies that are capable of creating impact and developing the labour market, in which migration forms a very important part.

As regards the tourists’ experience, this is complemented with the creation of tourist and cultural events that promote rural tourism. With respect to the scenarios proposed in research projects and publications, very specific areas or spaces are revealed: countries like Bulgaria or China, regions like Moravia, or areas like Celtiberia. A conceptual diagram is generated that is in constant evolution and contributes new study areas to the research field of “cultural tourism” and “depopulation”.

After analysing the results of the topics that arise around this combined theme (“cultural tourism” and “depopulation”) the scientometric study began. It is precisely from this study, that the ten most relevant scientific publications, authors, affiliations and countries were highlighted, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2
Ranking of the 10 First positions in the scientific output on Cultural Tourism & Depopulation

TOP	Publication titles	Number of records	Authors	Number of records	Affiliations	Number of records	Countries	Number of records
1	Archistor Architecture History Restoration	4	Cuesta- Valino P	2	Universidad de Leon	3	Italy	10

Cont... Table 2

2	Acta Geographica Slovenica Geografski Zbornik	2	Fassio G	2	University of Granada	3	Spain	10
3	European Countryside	2	Gutierrez-Rodriguez P	2	Mendel University In Brno	2	Czech Republic	3
4	Frontiers In Psychology	2	Lopez-Sanz JM	2	Universidad de Alcalá	2	France	3
5	Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development	2	Penelaseguia A	2	University of Turin	2	Japan	3
6	Revue De Geographie Alpine Journal of Alpine Research	2	Porcellana V	2	Wakayama University	2	Austria	2
7	Sustainability	2	Statna M	2	Acad Fine Arts Palermo	1	Canada	2
8	Ager Revista de Estudios sobre Despoblacion y Desarrollo Rural	1	Vaishar A	2	Anton Melik Geographical Institute Sasa	1	Croatia	2
9	Annales Anali Za Istrske in Mediteranske Studije Series Historia et Sociologia	1	Viazzo PP	2	Autonomous Prov Trento	1	England	2
10	Anthropocene and Islands Vulnerability Adaptation and Resilience to Natural Hazards and Climate Change	1	Zanini RC	2	Babes Bolyai University From Cluj	1	Mexico	2

Source: Own elaboration, 2022 with data obtained from Web of Science.

The publication titles that stand out the most in the ranking are completely emerging in this field. Only one journal, “Sustainability” with 2 records, is found, which compared to Table 1 only analyzed the results on “cultural tourism” as the only theme. It is clearly a publication that covers research and emerging topics.

However, the journals that appear in the ranking in Table 2 and link “cultural tourism” with “depopulation” are: “Archistor Architecture History Restoration” which stands out in first place with 4 records, followed by the following publications, each of which has two records: “Acta Geographica Slovenica Geografski Zbornik”, “European Countryside”, “Frontiers In Psychology”, “Journal of Cultural Heritage Management

and Sustainable Development”, and “Revue De Geographie Alpine Journal of Alpine Research”. After 8th position, the following publications only have one record: “Ager Revista de Estudios sobre Despoblacion y Desarrollo Rural”, “Annales Anali Za Istrske in Mediteranske Studije Series Historia et Sociologia”, and “Anthropocene and Islands Vulnerability Adaptation and Resilience to Natural Hazards and Climate Change”.

As can be seen, the output is not very significant. With the exception of the first publication, the fact that the others form part of the ranking is almost incidental.

In reference to the most noteworthy authors in this combined topic, they all have just two records each one. Looking at their connections and what aspects have been

addressed in this scientific output, three schools are distinguished depending on the topic. The first, is the Spanish school which is focused on tourism and particularly rural tourism, with the following authors: Pedro Cuesta Valiño, José María López Sanz and Azucena Penelas Leguía (from the University of Alcalá, Spain). Pablo Gutiérrez Rodríguez (from the University of León) also appears as a co-author, whose output around this topic has added the social aspect as it addresses tourism and depopulation.

Regarding the Italian school there is a focus on the social sphere, such as: Valentina Porcellana (from the University of Turin, Italy). Alongside her and appearing as co-authors in the ranking are: Giulia Fassio (from Sapienza University, Rome, in Italy), Pier Paolo Viazzo and Roberta Clara Zanini (both from the University of Turin, Italy).

The third Czech school is represented by: Milada Šťastná (from Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic) and Antonin Vaishar (from the Institute of Geonics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic) which record joint outputs that have focused on cultural tourism and rural tourism. In fact, these are the most important authors of the ranking in this topic.

Looking at the academic affiliations for which most publication records appear, they do not coincide once with the ranking on cultural tourism from Table 1. Therefore, own affiliations are shown, as had to be the case, from most of the cited authors. With 3 publications each, the two top positions are occupied by the “University of León” and the “University of Granada”. With 2 publications each, four different affiliations appear, which are: “Mendel University In Brno”, “University of Alcalá”, “University of Turin” and “Wakayama University”. The four last positions register just 1 publication each and are therefore considered primarily circumstantial. Among them appear: “Academy of Fine Arts in Palermo”, “Anton Melik Geographical Institute Sasa”, “Autonomous Province of Trento” and “Babes Bolyai University in Cluj”.

These academic affiliations also show us the countries that have generated most scientific output around “cultural tourism” and “depopulation”. In this case, coincidences with Table 1 on “cultural tourism” are denoted. Repeated in the ranking are countries like: Italy, Spain (with 10 records each), Canada and England (with 2 records each). However, there are new countries in this output, such as: The Czech Republic, France, Japan (with 3 records each), Austria, Croatia and even Mexico (with 2 records each).

The data reveal that “cultural tourism” and “depopulation” up to 2018 did not experience a steady rise in this kind of scientific output, while it is in 2020 and 2021 when significant, emerging output can be seen. This is materialised in the data that have been mentioned previously, since new publications appear that may be taken into consideration. However, exceptional cases are distinguished, such as conservation in the “Sustainability” ranking.

Authors and co-authors involved, to a greater or lesser extent are also considered, with the notorious appearance of Milada Šťastná and Antonin Vaishar, whose output is undoubtedly a reflection of the combination of cultural tourism and rural tourism, including depopulation. Academic affiliations, like the authors, are new incorporations in the field of cultural tourism. However, the countries remind us who the strongest are in this area, and still leading the way are: Italy, Spain, Canada and England. The other incorporations are thanks to their authors and affiliations, which are new to this field of study.

Conclusions

The bibliometric analysis and scientometric study offers us a heterogeneous and broad vision of how cultural tourism has been researched and how it has been studied through links with specific topics. Thanks to the WoS database, it has been possible to document each of these bibliometric aspects, and it is precisely its analysis and

scientometric study which reveals each of the points that have been presented. In the case of cultural tourism as a main topic, a total of 18,455 publications have been downloaded and analysed scientometrically. In this regard, for the last twenty years (the time frame encompassed by this study being 2002-2022), scientific output in this field has steadily grown, with 2021 being the most prolific year in terms of this growth.

Thus, standing out with almost a thousand publications are journal titles like “Pasos Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural”, with 827 records, “Sustainability”, with 683 records, or “Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change”, with 404 records, which are all major publications that have supported research in this topic. The most noteworthy authors are: Dallen J. Timothy, with 64 records, Sangkyun Kim, with 55 records and Honggang Xu with 42 records. And the academic affiliations with the greatest volume of scientific output generated are: “League of European Research Universities LERU” with 397 records, “Hong Kong Polytechnic University” with 239 records and “University of Macerata” in Italy with 226 records. This connection between authors, affiliations and countries reveals that the highest level of output comes from the U.S.A. (with 2,690 records), China (with 1,997 records) and Spain (with 1,834 records) in the top slots.

All this scientific output is reduced when the topic annexed to cultural tourism makes it more specialised. This study has analysed the volume that is generated at a scientific level when “cultural tourism” is linked to the issue of “depopulation”. In this case, they offered very limited data, with records of just 49 publications and 247 citations, in the last twenty years. This accounts for just 0.27% of scientific output on cultural tourism as a topic. However, the percentage increases to 29% of the output with respect to “tourism” as a general topic linked with “depopulation”.

Undoubtedly, this study has shown that it is an emerging issue, which until 2020-2021 had not experienced quantitative growth in its scientific output. And as a subject which has

been little explored but around which there is a growing interest, it is important to know what topics are in the orbit of these kinds of publications. Noteworthy among these topics are: migration, rural tourism, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, rural development and cultural heritage.

It is interesting to note that, although scientific output is fairly sparse and limited, the limitations that are found are solved by looking for related topics that help the development of tourism. In relation to this, highly relevant terms appear that aim to research into: how to enhance these areas and develop them through rural and sustainable tourism. Therefore, future lines of research revolve around solving problems such as migration from these sparsely populated areas through promoting cultural heritage, when converted into a tourism resource become in cultural tourism.

This study confirms the importance of carrying out quantitative research and helps to value the impact of cultural tourism in these uninhabited territories. As well as, it evaluates if the policies that are being applied by the governments and competent institutions, both from the point of view of the development of cultural tourism and from the socioeconomic one, are slowing down or reversing the problem of depopulation. A problem that already affects 80% of the European territory, and that in the case of Spain, according to the 2020 Annual Report of the Bank of Spain, 42% of its municipalities are in danger of depopulation. It is a threat six times bigger than that of neighbouring countries such as Italy (4%), Germany (1%), or France (7%), and more similar to countries further east and north of Europe such as Finland (55.7%), Estonia (58%) and Latvia (50.4%).

The bibliometric and scientometric study has also revealed interesting data. In the ranking of publications specialised in cultural tourism and depopulation only “*Archistor Architecture History Restoration*” stands out with 4 records, while all other publications have just one or two records. The authors and co-authors of the ranking are divided into

three very different groups, firstly, the group of Spanish, Italian and Czech authors.

Noteworthy, in the Spanish group are: Pedro Cuesta Valiño, José María López Sanz, Azucena Penelas Leguía and Pablo Gutiérrez Rodríguez. Standing out in the group of Italian authors are: Valentina Porcellana, Giulia Fassio, Pier Paolo Viazzo and Roberta Clara Zanini. While the notable authors from the Czech group include: Milada Šřastná and Antonín Vaishar, these two being authors who have a particularly rich volume of scientific output on cultural tourism and rural tourism, although in the ranking they are tied with 2 records each, when it comes to cultural tourism and depopulation.

There are few records as regards academic affiliations, with only 3 records for the Spanish universities of “University of León” and “University of Granada”. The others, like: “Mendel University in Brno”, “University of Alcalá”, “University of Turin” and “Wakayama University” have 2 records each, and are therefore of relatively little significance. Logically, the ranking of countries that lead this kind of scientific output are: Italy and Spain (with 10 records each). The remaining affiliations accumulate little more than 2 or 3 records, meaning they are not of great importance.

These are clearly novel topics, as their output in conjunction with cultural tourism is almost purely incidental today. Nonetheless, they are still of importance given that the pandemic has reoriented tourism, giving value to rural tourism through cultural heritage. Sparsely populated areas are realising the potential of cultural tourism as a new development driver to combat depopulation, and this is a topic increasingly addressed in the scientific output as has been demonstrated in this study.

Depopulation is an issue affecting a growing number of rural territories, which are witnessing their populations dwindle and need tools to mitigate this. In this regard, if the tourist destination also boasts cultural heritage that can be transformed into a tourism resource, then confirms how cultural tourism

can serve as an instrument that can boost development in rural areas. In turn, this kind of tourism can generate a socioeconomic impact on the surrounding area, which, thanks to sustainability, encourages behaviour that favours its appropriate development.

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