

# Urban Regeneration and Heritage Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis Over Three Decades

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## ABSTRACT

This paper conducts a bibliometric analysis of urban regeneration and heritage tourism research to uncover key trends, influential studies, and collaborative networks over the past three decades. Using a dataset of 101 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus and following PRISMA guidelines, the study applies citation analysis, co-authorship mapping, and keyword co-occurrence through the Bibliometrix R package to visualize thematic clusters and research dynamics. Five central research clusters emerged: Heritage Tourism and Urban Development, Cultural Influence and Project Management, Regeneration and Sustainability, Redevelopment and Gentrification, and Local Participation. Findings highlight a growing focus on sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and the balance of tourism-driven economic growth with cultural preservation, though largely from Western perspectives. The study emphasizes a need for longitudinal, data-driven research, particularly in underrepresented regions, to fully address heritage tourism's socio-economic and cultural impacts on urban regeneration. This analysis provides a structured roadmap for future research, offering valuable insights for scholars and policymakers aiming for sustainable urban transformation.

**Keywords:** Urban Regeneration, Heritage Tourism, Bibliometric Analysis, Sustainability, Cultural Preservation, Stakeholder Engagement.

## INTRODUCTION

Urban regeneration and heritage tourism have garnered significant attention from scholars, urban planners, and policymakers over recent decades (Orts-Cardador, Perez-Galvez, Fuentes, & Alba, 2024; Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Urban regeneration involves revitalizing neglected or underutilized urban areas into economically vibrant and socially cohesive spaces, thereby contributing to urban resilience and improved quality of life (Lak, Gheitasi, & Timothy, 2020; Roberts, 2000). Heritage tourism, leveraging cultural, historical, and architectural resources, increasingly serves as a catalyst for urban economic and social revitalization, enhancing urban attractiveness and community identity (Rahman & Halim, 2021; Spirou, Gardner, Spears, & Allegretti, 2020; Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Together, these fields offer a powerful framework for sustainable urban development.

While tourism-led regeneration can stimulate economic growth, improve infrastructure, and create employment

opportunities (Quetglas-Llull, Barrera-Fernández, & Hernández-Escampa, 2023), it can also introduces complex challenges, including gentrification, cultural commodification, social displacement, and erosion of cultural authenticity, particularly when tourism development lacks inclusive and sustainable planning (Lei & Zhou, 2022; Ozden & Turgut, 2005; M. K. Smith, 2007; Zhu, Yu, & Li, 2024). Therefore, balancing heritage conservation with tourism-driven economic revitalization has become a critical concern in contemporary urban planning (MacCannell, 2013; Quetglas-Llull et al., 2023; Shaolian, 2017).

Although substantial research has examined these individual themes, the intersection of urban regeneration and heritage tourism remains relatively unexplored from a bibliometric perspective. Existing bibliometric studies frequently examine heritage tourism (Bhowmik, 2021; Chang, Milne, Fallon, & Pohlmann, 1996; Y. D. Liu, 2014; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023) or urban regeneration (Nyau & Chin, 2023; Zhang et al., 2020) separately, without adequately addressing their intersection. Given the global challenges of rapid urbanization and increasing tourism pressures (Brito & Zarrilli, 2023), a systematic bibliometric analysis is essential for understanding overarching trends, research collaborations, thematic clusters, and knowledge gaps within this interdisciplinary area.

### **This study aims explicitly to:**

1. Identify influential trends, thematic clusters, and scholarly contributions in the fields of urban regeneration and heritage tourism.
2. Map collaborative networks among key authors, institutions, and countries involved in this interdisciplinary research domain.
3. Assess geographic and methodological disparities within the existing literature, emphasizing underexplored regions and research methodologies.
4. Highlight critical gaps and propose a roadmap for future research aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive urban regeneration.

This research utilizes the Scopus database due to its extensive coverage and scholarly credibility, recognizing potential limitations of database selection, and proposes that future complementary analyses could include databases such as Web of Science. The outcomes of this bibliometric analysis are expected to offer critical insights for urban planners, policymakers, heritage tourism managers, and academic researchers. By systematically unveiling key themes, collaborations, and existing research gaps, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to developing inclusive, culturally sensitive, and sustainable urban transformation strategies worldwide.

## **DATA, METHOD AND REVIEW STRUCTURE**

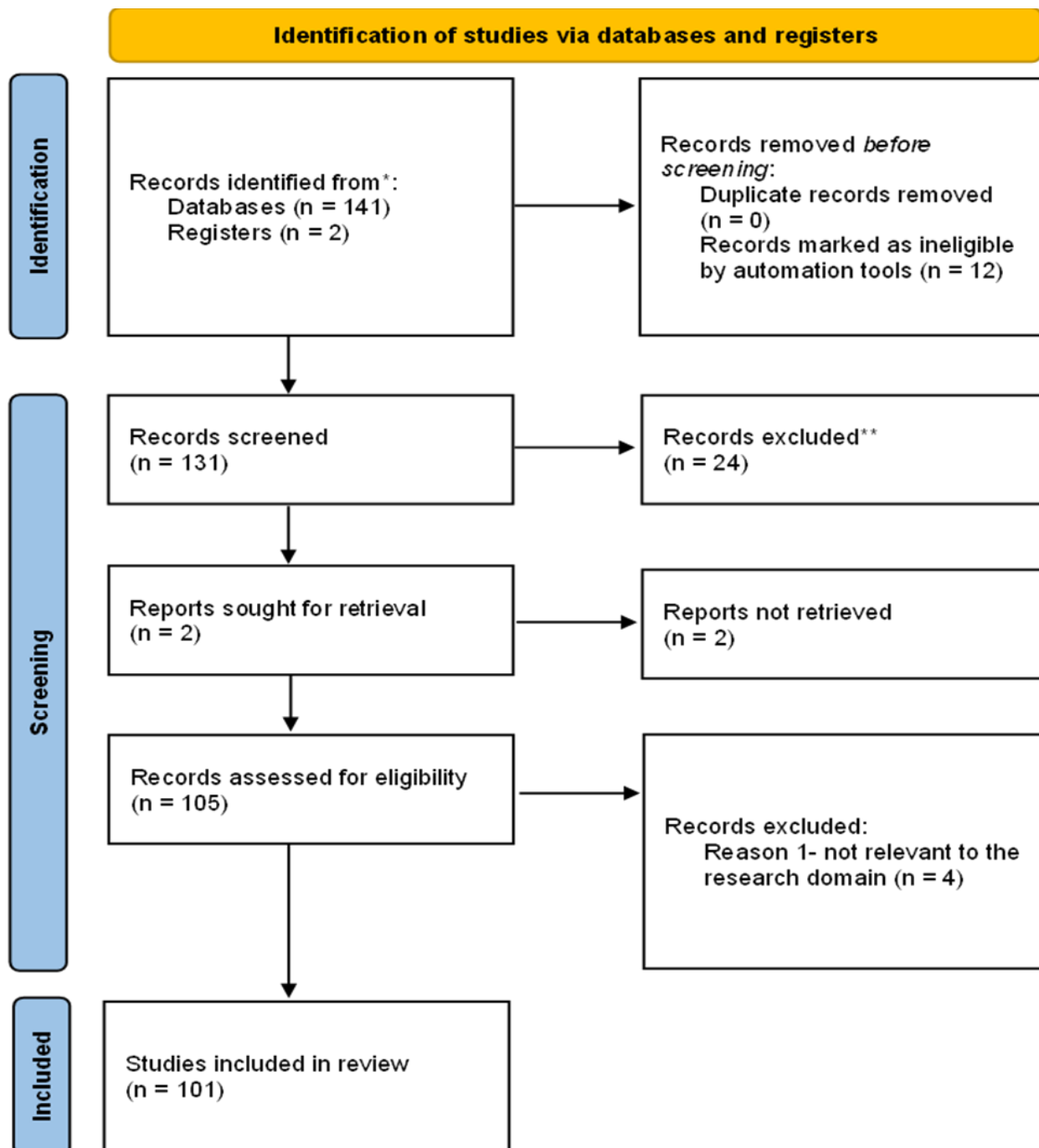
### **Data Collection and Criteria**

This bibliometric analysis employed a structured and systematic approach following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The Scopus database was exclusively selected due to its extensive indexing of high-quality peer-reviewed literature in urban studies, tourism, cultural heritage, and interdisciplinary fields, closely aligning with the research scope (Gomes, Lopes, & Ferreira, 2024; Prerana, Kapoor, & Jain, 2024). Scopus was preferred for its rigorous review standards, comprehensive coverage, and reliable citation data, thereby ensuring the robustness of the findings.

Initially, the search query focused explicitly on scholarly literature addressing the intersections between urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The query utilized the following key terms:

*( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "urban regeneration" OR "urban revitalization" OR "urban conservation" OR "urban rejuvenation" OR "urban redevelopment" OR "Urban Renewal" OR "brownfield redevelopment" ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "cultural tourism" OR "heritage tourism" OR "Cultural Heritage Tourism" OR "historic tourism" OR "historical tourism" OR "Community-Based Tourism" OR "architectural heritage tourism" OR "religious heritage tourism" ) )*

Subsequently, the dataset was refined by applying several exclusion criteria (PRISMA model) (Figure 1). First, documents not written in English were excluded, removing 12 entries. Additionally, non-peer-reviewed materials, including 2 books, 15 book chapters, and 7 conference papers, were excluded, reducing the number of entries by 24. Furthermore, 2 documents without author details were removed, along with 4 documents deemed irrelevant to the research domain. As a result of this rigorous selection process, 101 final documents were retained for review, ensuring a focus on high-quality, peer-reviewed literature relevant to the themes of urban regeneration and heritage tourism.



\*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/register).

\*\*If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

**Figure 1: PRISMA model-flow diagram**

Source: Authors

## Bibliometric Analysis Methodology

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using Bibliometrix, a robust R package specifically designed for comprehensive bibliometric research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Gomes et al., 2024). Bibliometrix provides advanced analytical tools to systematically examine, visualize, and interpret large datasets, enabling the effective mapping of scholarly trends, networks, and thematic dynamics (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The following bibliometric techniques were applied:

- **Citation Analysis:** To identify influential papers, authors, and journals shaping scholarly discourse (Prerana et al., 2024).
- **Co-authorship Analysis:** To uncover collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries, highlighting networks and collaboration trends (Stuart, 2018).
- **Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis:** Used to reveal prominent themes, thematic clusters, and emerging research areas within urban regeneration and heritage tourism research (Bhowmik, 2021).

Visualizations such as co-authorship networks, keyword networks, citation maps, and word clouds were generated to enhance interpretability and clearly present the complex interrelationships within the scholarly literature (Prerana et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020).

## Review structure

The bibliometric analysis is organized systematically to facilitate clarity and ease of comprehension. Initially, descriptive statistics outlining the characteristics of the dataset, including publication trends, journal productivity, and authorship patterns, are provided (Stuart, 2018). Subsequently, the analysis delves into the intellectual structure of the field, identifying key authors, influential studies, and central thematic clusters through citation analysis, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence (Prerana et al., 2024). Geographic disparities and methodological trends within the literature are also explicitly examined. Finally, the analysis concludes by highlighting critical gaps, suggesting future research directions, and discussing practical implications for urban planners, policymakers, heritage tourism managers, and academic researchers.

## OVERVIEW AT A GLANCE

Table 1 provides an overview of the main characteristics of the research on urban regeneration and heritage tourism from 1989 to 2024. A total of 101 documents were analyzed, drawn from 64 sources, including journals and books, with an annual growth rate of 5.72%. The average age of the documents is 9.63 years, and they have received an average of 23.5 citations per document. These publications collectively reference 5,291 sources. In terms of content, 297 Keywords Plus and 372 author keywords were identified, reflecting the thematic diversity within the field. The research involves 217 authors, with 42 single-authored documents, indicating significant collaboration. The average number of co-authors per document is 2.28, and 18.81% of the publications involve international co-authorships. All documents analyzed are journal articles, underscoring the focus on peer-reviewed academic contributions in this field.

**Table 1: Main information**

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1989:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	64
Documents	101
Annual Growth Rate %	5.72

Document Average Age	9.63
Average citations per doc	23.5
References	5291
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	297
Author's Keywords (DE)	372
AUTHORS	
Authors	217
Authors of single-authored docs	42
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	42
Co-Authors per Doc	2.28
International co-authorships %	18.81
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	101

Source: Authors

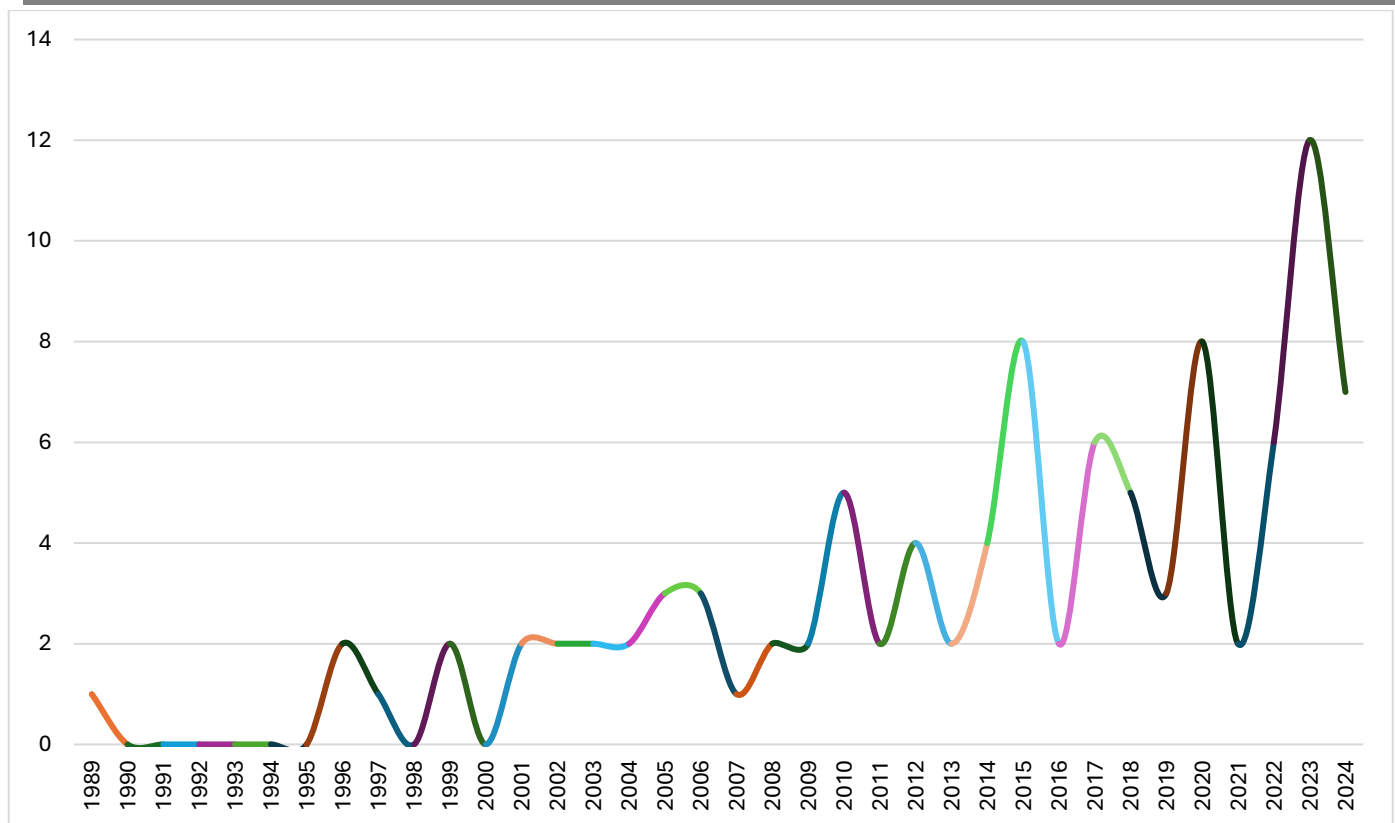
Figure 2 presents a word cloud that visually highlights the most frequently occurring keywords in the research on urban regeneration and heritage tourism. Prominent terms such as "heritage tourism," "urban renewal," "tourism development," and "heritage conservation" reflect the central themes of the literature. The varying sizes of the words represent their relative frequency, with larger words indicating higher occurrences in the analyzed documents, showcasing the key focus areas within the field.



Figure 2: Word cloud

## Articles and citations over year

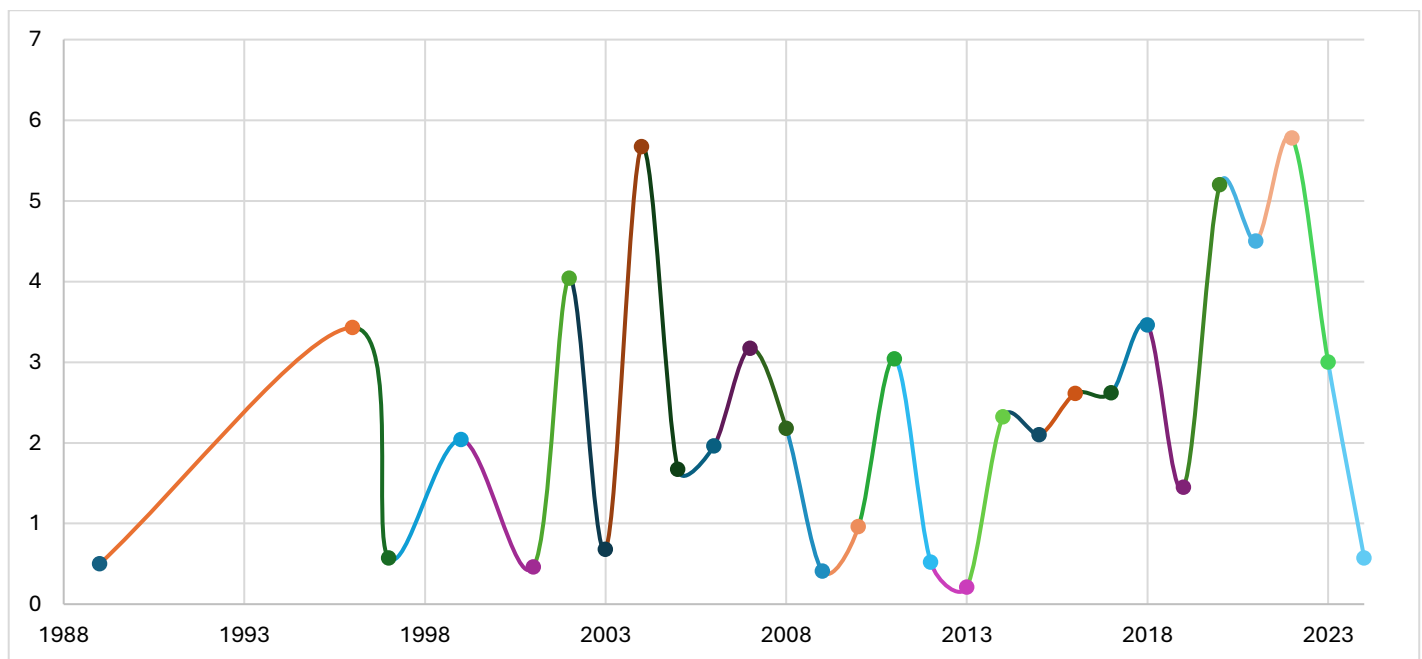
Figure 3 illustrates the trend in the number of articles published over the years on urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The graph shows a gradual increase in publications from the late 1980s through the 2000s, with a significant rise starting around 2015. The sharp increase in the number of articles in recent years, particularly post-2020, indicates growing academic interest and research output in this field. This trend highlights the evolving importance of the subject in both academic and practical domains.



**Figure 3: Articles over years**

Source: Authors

Figure 4 illustrates the average citations per year for articles on urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The graph shows fluctuations in citation rates over the years, with notable peaks around 2003, 2015, and 2023, indicating periods where key articles significantly impacted the academic discourse. These peaks suggest that certain publications from these years were highly influential in shaping subsequent research. The overall trend highlights the growing visibility and academic impact of the field, particularly in recent years.



**Figure 4: Average citation per year**

Source: Authors

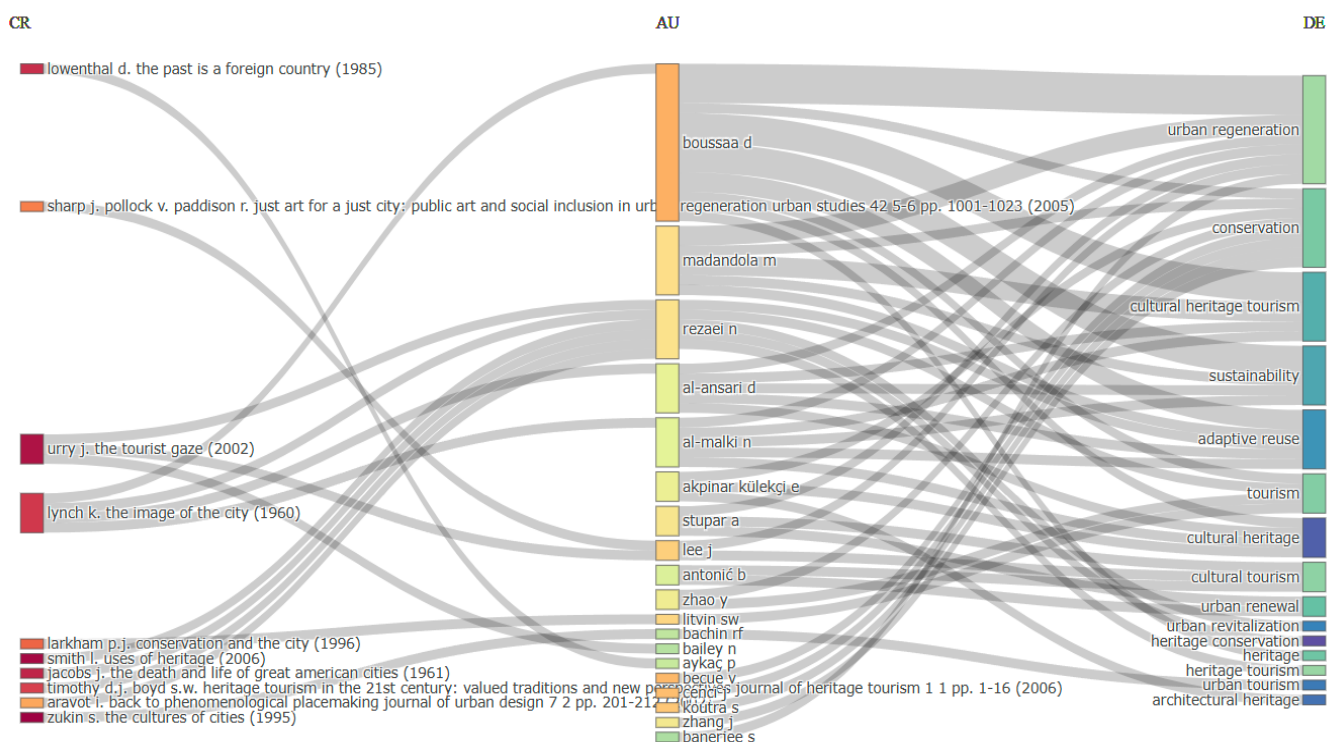


## Cited references, authors and field

The three-field plot (Figure-5) provides an in-depth look at how foundational works, prominent authors, and key research themes interact within the fields of heritage tourism and urban regeneration. Foundational references such as Lowenthal's *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) examine the ways societies engage with the past, influencing themes like cultural heritage tourism and conservation. Sharp, Pollock, and Paddison's *Just Art for a Just City* (2005) focuses on the role of art in promoting social justice in urban areas, supporting themes like urban regeneration and sustainability. Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (2002) provides a framework for understanding cultural tourism as a constructed experience, while Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) contributes to urban renewal and adaptive reuse through its focus on urban legibility. Additionally, Larkham's *Conservation and the City* (1996) discusses the balance between urban development and preservation, further grounding the theme of conservation.

In the Authors (AU) section, contemporary scholars like Boussaa D., Madandola M., Rezaei N., and Al-Malki N. expand on these foundational works to address current issues within their fields. For example, Boussaa builds on Sharp et al.'s (2005) ideas to explore socially inclusive approaches to urban regeneration, while Madandola integrates insights from Lowenthal (1985) and Larkham (1996) to balance conservation with urban growth. Rezaei applies Urry's (2002) concept of the tourist gaze to cultural heritage tourism, focusing on maintaining cultural authenticity for tourists. Al-Malki's research on adaptive reuse draws from Lynch's (1960) ideas, promoting the revitalization of old buildings without losing historical significance. Each author thus bridges foundational theories with practical applications in heritage tourism and urban regeneration.

The Themes/Keywords (DE) section highlights major research areas, including urban regeneration, cultural heritage tourism, sustainability, adaptive reuse, and urban renewal. These themes indicate a focus on creating economically vibrant yet culturally respectful cities. For example, urban regeneration and revitalization align with Sharp et al.'s (2005) advocacy for art's role in urban justice, while cultural heritage tourism draws from Lowenthal (1985), Urry (2002), and Timothy and Boyd (2006), emphasizing sustainable practices that benefit both heritage preservation and tourism. Zukin's *The Cultures of Cities* (1995) and Smith's *Uses of Heritage* (2006) also contribute by advocating for cultural diversity and inclusivity in heritage definitions, supporting urban revitalization and heritage conservation. Together, these connections reflect a holistic approach to urban development that values cultural heritage alongside modernization.



**Figure 5: Three-field plot**

Source: Authors

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF JOURNALS

Table 2 presents the local impact of core journals in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism, measured by key bibliometric indices. Tourism Management holds the highest total citations (TC) at 360, with an h-index of 6 and a g-index of 6, indicating its significant influence since it started publishing relevant articles in 1999. Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change follows with 147 total citations and an h-index of 5. Notably, Sustainability (Switzerland) has a high m-index of 0.800, reflecting rapid impact since its inclusion in the field in 2020, while Journal of Heritage Tourism shows a strong m-index of 0.444, highlighting its influence despite fewer total citations (61). Other journals such as Cities and Habitat International have garnered notable citations, reflecting the diversity of publication outlets contributing to this interdisciplinary research area.

**Table 2: Source local impact in the field**

Source	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	PY_start
Tourism Management	6	6	0.230	360	1999
Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	5	5	0.357	147	2011
International Journal of Heritage Studies	4	6	0.200	134	2005
Journal of Heritage Tourism	4	4	0.444	61	2016
Sustainability (Switzerland)	4	5	0.800	73	2020
Cities	3	3	0.300	141	2015
European Planning Studies	2	2	0.181	76	2014
Habitat International	2	2	0.200	73	2015
International Journal of Tourism Cities	2	2	0.200	14	2015
Journal of Urban History	2	3	0.095	16	2004

Source: Authors

## AUTHORS, AFFILIATIONS AND COUNTRIES

### Relevant authors, productivity and social networks

Table 3 provides an overview of the most relevant authors in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism, highlighting their local impact based on several bibliometric indices. Authors such as Becue V. (Zhang, Cenci, Becue, & Koutra, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), Zhang J. (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), Cenci J. (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), and Koutra S. (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020) have an h-index of 2, a g-index of 2, and a total citation count (TC) of 84, indicating significant influence with their works starting in 2020. Similarly, Lee J. (Jung, Lee, Yap, & Ineson, 2015; Park, Lee, & Lee, 2017) stands out with 118 total citations and contributions since 2015. Boussaa D. (Al-Ansari, Al-Malki, Boussaa, & Ferwati, 2024; Boussaa, 2015b; Boussaa & Madandola, 2024; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023) and Rezaei N. (Rezaei, 2017; Rezaei, Ghaderi, & Ghanipour, 2022) have contributed 4 and 2 papers, respectively, with notable citations. The table also includes details on the most cited (MC) and most recent (MR) papers for each author, providing insight into their key contributions. These metrics highlight the contributions and scholarly impact of authors within this research domain, reflecting their influence on the development of knowledge in urban regeneration and heritage tourism.

**Table 3: Most relevant authors and local impacts**

Author	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start	MC paper	MR paper
Becue V	2	2	0.4	84	2	2020	Zhang et al. (2020)	Zhang et al. (2021)

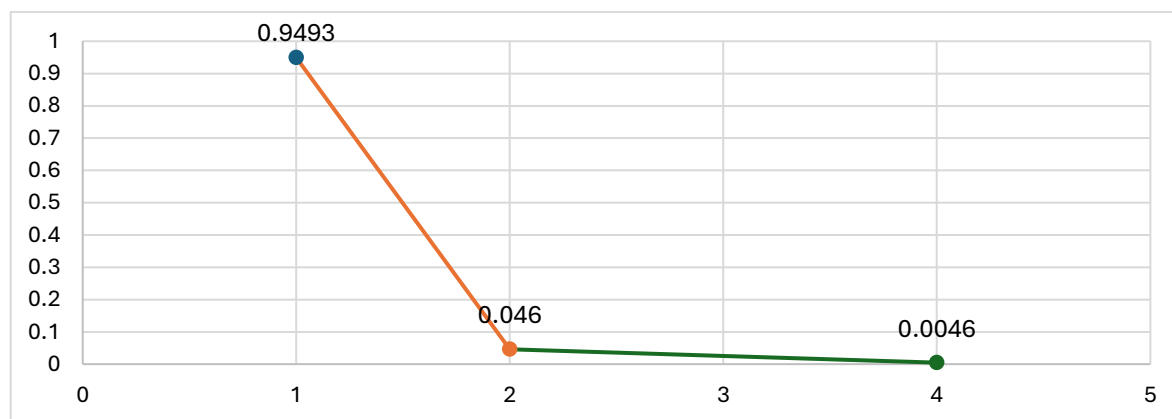


Boussaa D	2	4	0.2	20	4	2015	Madandola and Boussaa (2023)	Boussaa and Madandola (2024)
Cenci J	2	2	0.4	84	2	2020	Zhang et al. (2020)	Zhang et al. (2021)
Koutra S	2	2	0.4	84	2	2020	Zhang et al. (2020)	Zhang et al. (2021)
Lee J	2	2	0.2	118	2	2015	Jung et al. (2015)	Park et al. (2017)
Rezaei N	2	2	0.25	43	2	2017	Rezaei (2017)	Rezaei et al. (2022)
Zhang J	2	2	0.4	84	2	2020	Zhang et al. (2020)	Zhang et al. (2021)
Zhao Y	2	2	0.4	42	2	2020	Zhao, Ponzini, and Zhang (2020)	Li et al. (2022)
Ashton C	1	1	0.07	9	1	2012	Ashton (2012)	Ashton (2012)
Aykaç P	1	1	0.16	4	1	2019	Aykaç (2019)	Aykaç (2019)

Note: TC=Total citations, NP=No. of papers, PY=Paper year, MC=Most cited, MR=More recent

Source: Authors

Figure 6 illustrates author productivity according to Lotka's Law, which describes the distribution of scientific productivity. The graph shows that a small percentage of authors contribute the majority of publications, with the most productive author (represented by the point at 0.9493) responsible for nearly all the output. A steep decline follows, indicating that a large number of authors contribute fewer publications, with lower productivity levels. This pattern aligns with Lotka's Law, demonstrating the typical skewed distribution where a few prolific authors dominate the research output in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism.

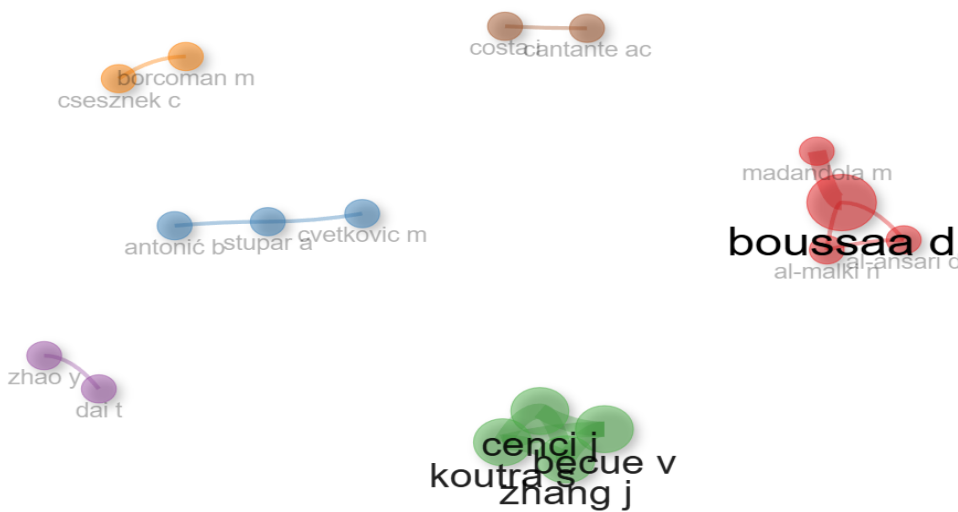


**Figure 6: Author productivity by Lotka's Law**

Source: Authors

Figure 7 illustrates the collaboration networks among key authors in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The clusters indicate groups of authors who frequently collaborate on research. The largest cluster, shown in green, features authors such as Becue V., Koutra S., Cenci J., and Zhang J., (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020) highlighting a strong network of collaboration among them. Similarly, the red cluster represents Boussaa D. and co-authors (Al-Ansari et al., 2024; Boussaa, 2015b; Boussaa & Madandola, 2024; Madandola & Boussaa, 2023), indicating another active research group. Smaller clusters, such as Zhao Y. and Dai T. (Li et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2020), as well as Antonić D. and Cvetković M. (Antonić, Djukić, Dmitrović, & Čugalj,

2024; AntoniĆ, Stupar, et al., 2024), show isolated collaborations. This network visualization underscores the collaborative nature of research in this domain, with certain groups of authors contributing significantly to the research landscape.

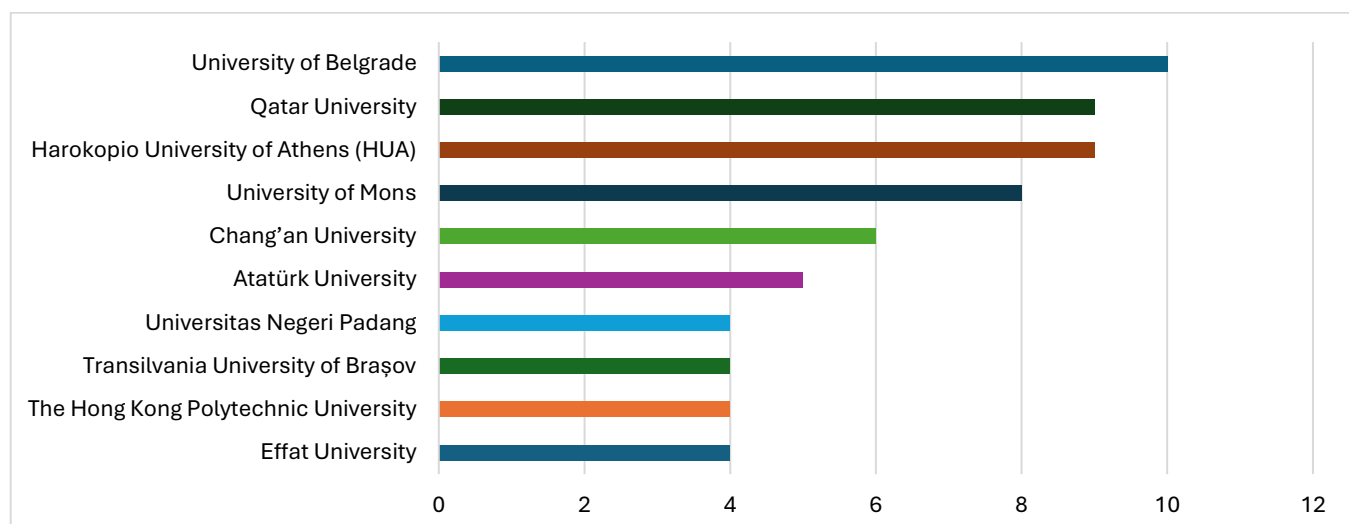


**Figure 7: Authors' collaboration networks**

Source: Authors

### Most relevant affiliations

Figure 8 highlights the most relevant affiliations contributing to research on urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The University of Belgrade leads with 10 articles, followed by Qatar University and Harokopio University of Athens (HUA), each contributing 9 articles. University of Mons and Chang'an University have produced 8 and 6 articles, respectively. Other institutions like Atatürk University and Universitas Negeri Padang have made notable contributions, with 5 and 4 articles each. This chart reflects the diverse range of international institutions actively engaged in research within this field, showcasing strong contributions from both European and Asian universities.

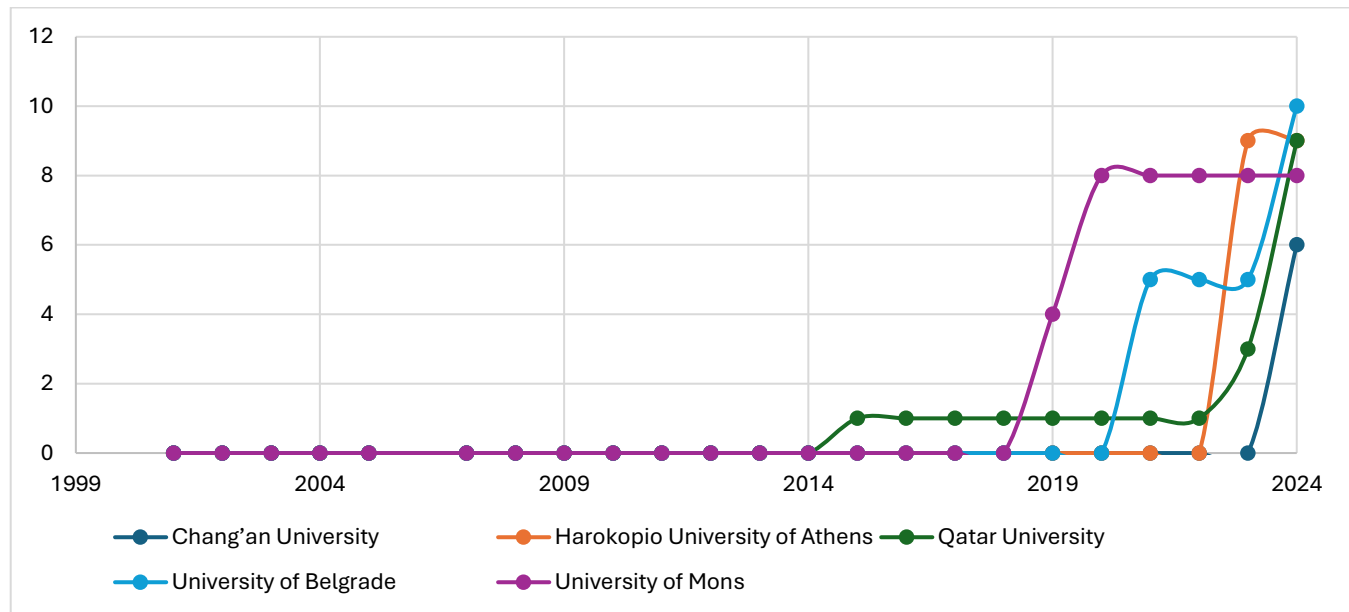


**Figure 8: Most relevant affiliations**

Source: Authors

Figure 9 shows the production of research articles over time by the most relevant academic affiliations in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The University of Mons began contributing significantly to the field around 2014, showing steady growth. University of Belgrade and Harokopio University of Athens both

saw a sharp increase in research output from 2019 onwards. Similarly, Qatar University and Chang'an University have experienced notable growth since 2016. This timeline highlights the expanding involvement of these institutions in the field, particularly in recent years, reflecting their increasing contributions to the body of research.

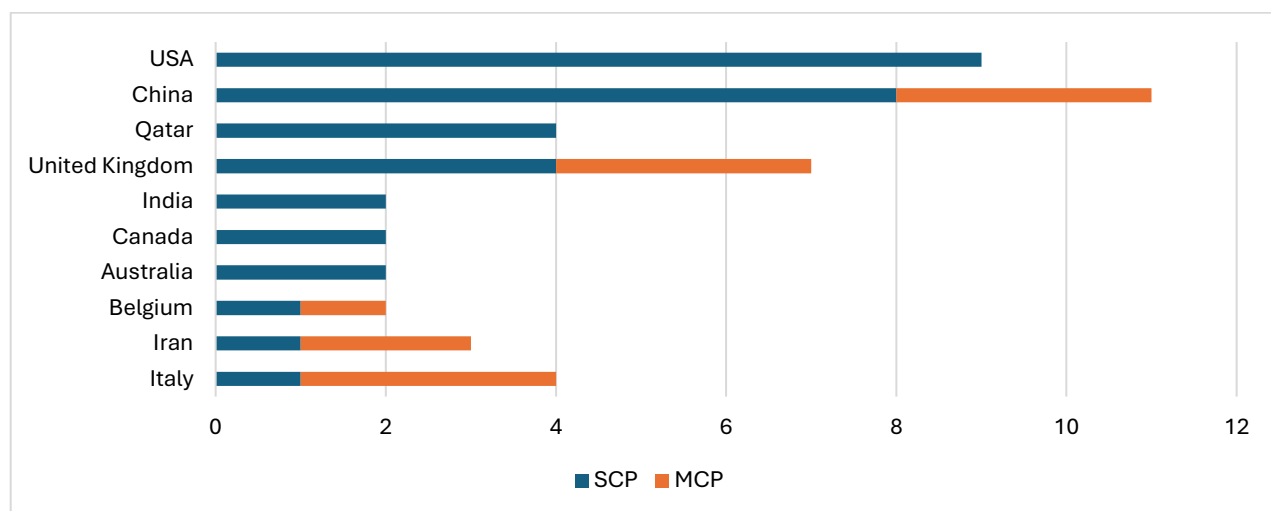


**Figure 9: Affiliation's production over time**

Source: Authors

### Most relevant countries

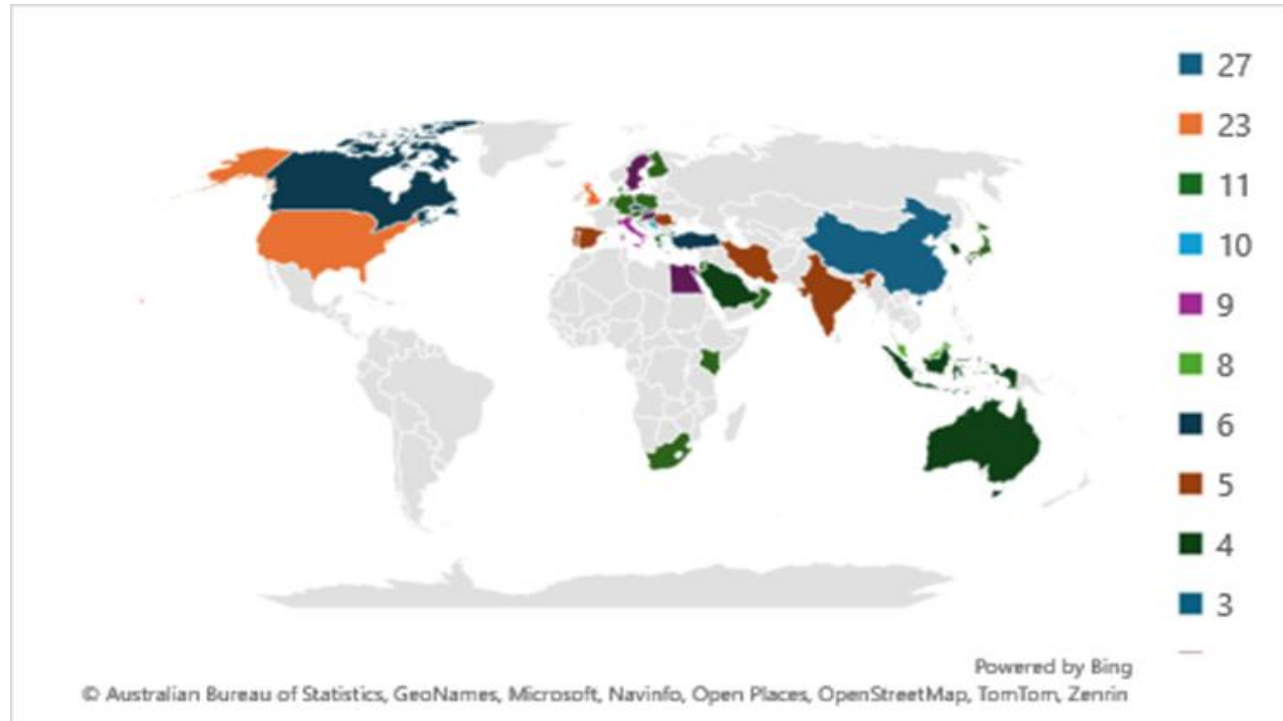
Figure 10 presents the corresponding authors' countries, highlighting the single-country publications (SCP) and multiple-country publications (MCP). The USA leads in the number of single-country publications, followed closely by China and Qatar, with China showing a significant number of multiple-country publications as well. The United Kingdom also has a notable presence in both SCP and MCP, indicating strong collaboration with international researchers. Other countries like India, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Iran, and Italy also contribute, with some engagement in international collaborations. This figure illustrates the geographic diversity of research contributions and the importance of international collaborations in advancing the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism



**Figure 10: Corresponding author's countries**

Source: Authors

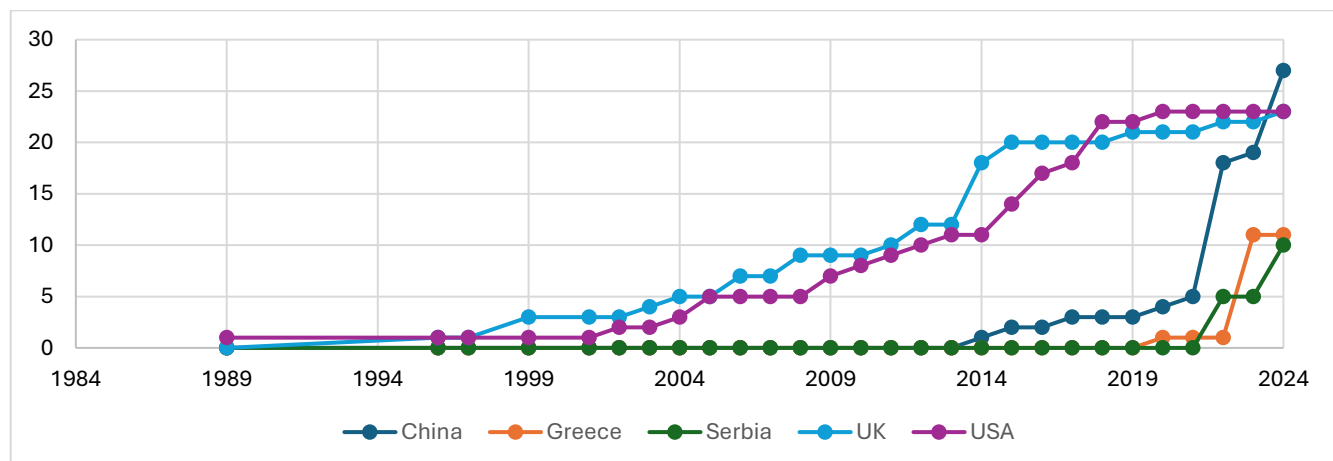
Figure 11 depicts the global distribution of article production in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The USA leads with the highest number of publications (27), followed by China (23), and other prominent contributors such as Qatar (11) and the United Kingdom (10). Several countries from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, including India, Italy, Iran, and Belgium, are also active contributors, producing between 3 to 9 articles. This map highlights the international scope of research in this field, with significant contributions from a diverse range of countries across different continents.



**Figure 11: Article production by countries**

Source: Authors

Figure 12 illustrates the growth in research output over time for several key countries in the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The USA and China have experienced the most significant growth, particularly since 2014, with China showing a steep rise in recent years. The United Kingdom has also seen steady growth since the early 2000s, while Serbia shows more recent but notable contributions starting from 2014. Greece began contributing more recently as well, with an increase in research output from 2019. This figure reflects the expanding global interest in urban regeneration and heritage tourism, with increasing contributions from countries across different regions.



**Figure 12: Country production over time**

Source: Authors

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF ARTICLES

### Most relevant articles

The reviewed collection of papers (refer Table 4) offers a comprehensive look at the intersection of cultural tourism, urban regeneration, and heritage management, yet it reveals notable thematic and methodological gaps. García (2004) and Chang et al. (1996) provide foundational analyses on how cities leverage cultural and heritage tourism to promote economic growth and global positioning. García (2004) examination of arts programming during major events emphasizes the role of culture in city branding, while Chang et al. (1996) highlight the tensions between global tourism demands and local cultural preservation. However, both papers focus heavily on Western and developed economies, leaving out critical perspectives from the Global South or smaller cities that might face different challenges in heritage tourism. Moreover, while these studies offer important qualitative insights into city marketing and commodification of culture, they fall short in providing empirical, data-driven evaluations of the long-term social and economic outcomes of these urban strategies.

Papers such as Russo and Van Der Borg (2002) and Jung et al. (2015) delve deeper into the operational challenges of cultural tourism, particularly in relation to planning and stakeholder collaboration. Russo and Van Der Borg (2002) address the negative externalities of over-tourism in European cities, suggesting that poor planning exacerbates these effects. Meanwhile, Jung et al. (2015) stress the need for multi-stakeholder involvement to ensure the sustainability of cultural tourism projects, as demonstrated by the Gwangju project in South Korea. Both papers contribute significantly to the discourse on sustainable tourism development but share a common limitation—an over-reliance on qualitative analysis without sufficient integration of quantitative data to support their conclusions. The absence of long-term empirical studies tracking the actual economic, environmental, and social impacts of these tourism strategies hinders the generalizability of their findings.

Notably, some papers break from the Western-centric perspective by exploring heritage tourism in non-Western contexts. Lak et al. (2020) offer a case study on Kashan, Iran, while Dutta, Banerjee, and Husain (2007) explore untapped heritage tourism potential in Calcutta, India. These studies bring valuable perspectives to the conversation, offering insights into regions that are often underrepresented in cultural tourism research. However, their contributions are limited by methodological weaknesses—both papers would benefit from stronger quantitative approaches, such as longitudinal studies or contingent valuation methods, to substantiate their claims about heritage tourism’s economic potential. Furthermore, while they emphasize the role of cultural tourism in urban regeneration, their focus on single cities restricts the broader applicability of their conclusions.

Collectively, the papers underline the importance of cultural tourism in shaping urban economies and identities, but they also reveal significant gaps in the literature. Bille and Schulze (2006) discuss the broader role of culture in urban development, but the lack of empirical grounding is a recurring issue. Similarly, Y. D. Liu (2014) looks at industrial heritage tourism, while Zhang et al. (2020) provide a bibliometric analysis of recent trends, both works highlight the need for a more comprehensive data-driven approach. The predominance of Western case studies suggests a need for more comparative research across diverse global regions. Future research should integrate quantitative methods, address sustainability challenges, and explore technological innovations in tourism management to provide more comprehensive and actionable insights for urban planners and policymakers.

**Table 4: Most relevant articles**

Title	Authors	TC (Scopus)	TC per Year (Scopus)	TC (Google)
Urban Regeneration, Arts Programming and Major Events: Glasgow 1990, Sydney 2000 and Barcelona 2004	García (2004)	228	10.85	553
Urban heritage tourism: The Global-Local	Chang et al. (1996)	199	6.86	496

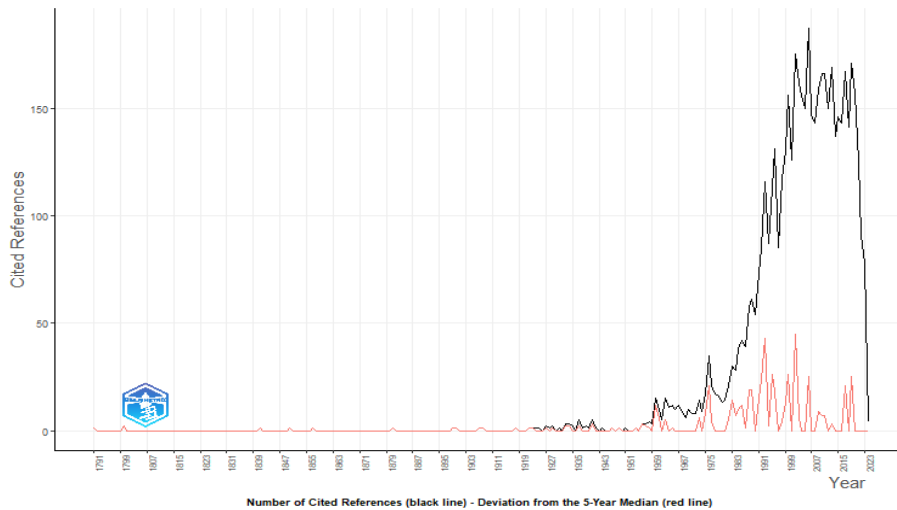


Nexus				
Planning considerations for cultural tourism: A case study of four European cities	Russo and Van Der Borg (2002)	137	5.95	468
The role of stakeholder collaboration in culture-led urban regeneration: A case study of the Gwangju project, Korea	Jung et al. (2015)	80	8.00	154
Developing the heritage tourism product in multi-ethnic cities	Caffyn and Lutz (1999)	73	2.80	166
Urban regeneration through heritage tourism: cultural policies and strategic management	Lak et al. (2020)	72	14.40	141
Oslo's new Opera House: Cultural flagship, regeneration tool or destination icon?	A. Smith and von Krogh Strand (2011)	67	4.78	138
Cultural Events and Cultural Tourism Development: Lessons from the European Capitals of Culture	Y. D. Liu (2014)	66	6.00	207
Untapped demand for heritage: A contingent valuation study of Prinsep Ghat, Calcutta	Dutta et al. (2007)	57	3.16	116
Culture in Urban and Regional Development	Bille and Schulze (2006)	57	3.00	204
Recent evolution of research on industrial heritage in Western Europe and China based on bibliometric analysis	Zhang et al. (2020)	54	10.80	72
Categorisation of cultural tourism attractions by tourist preference using location-based social network data: The case of Central, Hong Kong	Z. Liu et al. (2022)	52	17.33	74
Mega-events and their legacy: Image and tourism in Genoa, Turin and Milan	Ferrari and Guala (2017)	51	6.37	108
Location, politics, and the production of civil rights memorial landscapes	Dwyer (2002)	49	2.13	77
Visual preference dimensions of historic urban areas: The determinants for urban heritage conservation	Deghati Najd et al. (2015)	46	4.6	82

Source: Authors

## References spectroscopy

Figure 13 shows a references spectroscopy, plotting the number of cited references (black line) over time, along with the deviation from the 5-year median (red line). The graph highlights a sharp increase in cited references starting from the mid-1990s, reaching a peak in the 2000s and continuing into recent years. This indicates a significant growth in the body of research being referenced within the field of urban regeneration and heritage tourism. The red line, showing deviations from the median, suggests fluctuations in citation patterns, with notable spikes in certain years. This visualization reflects the expanding knowledge base and the increasing influence of earlier works in shaping contemporary research.



**Figure 13: References spectroscopy**

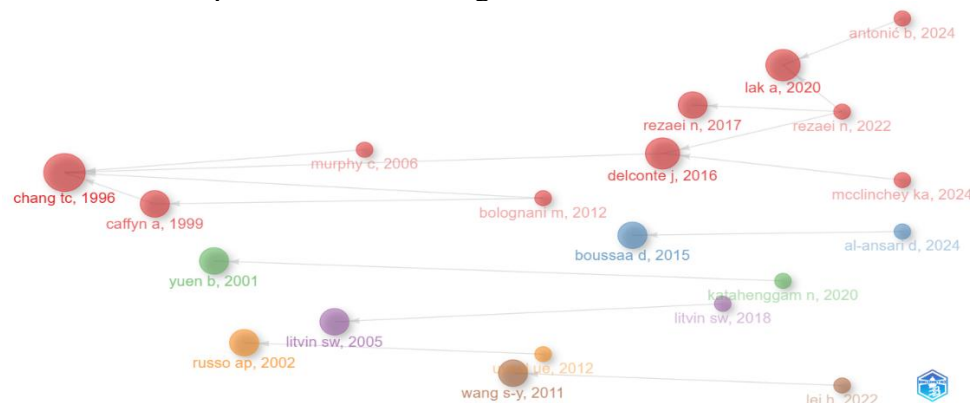
Source: Authors

## INTELLECTUAL STRUCTURE

### Historiograph

The historiograph presented provides a visual representation of the scholarly development within the field of heritage tourism and urban regeneration, tracing the intellectual influences of key studies from the 1990s to the present. At the heart of this analysis is Chang et al. (1996), which appears as the largest node, underscoring its foundational role in shaping early discourse around the intersection of global tourism and local urban heritage. Chang's work, focusing on the global-local nexus, likely established critical frameworks that subsequent scholars such as Caffyn and Lutz (1999) and Murphy and Boyle (2006) expanded upon, examining how heritage tourism could be adapted to post-industrial and multi-ethnic urban contexts. These early studies paved the way for understanding how cities can leverage their cultural and historical assets for economic regeneration, particularly in regions experiencing deindustrialization.

More recent works, such as Delconte, Kline, and Scavo (2016) and Lak et al. (2020), signal a shift towards examining the role of arts and culture in fostering community development and sustainable urban regeneration. These studies appear as larger nodes connected to a cluster of publications from the 2020s, reflecting an ongoing evolution of thought where urban regeneration strategies are increasingly concerned with sustainability, community participation, and cultural equity. The connections between Lak et al. (2020) and subsequent works like Rezaei et al. (2022) and Antonić, Djukić, et al. (2024) suggest that contemporary research continues to build upon earlier theoretical foundations while integrating new methodologies and addressing modern urban challenges. This progression highlights both the enduring influence of early research and the dynamic nature of the field as it responds to the evolving needs of urban environments.



**Figure 14: Historiograph**

Source: Authors

## CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE

### Co-words network

Figure 15 illustrates the co-words network, showcasing the interconnections between frequently occurring keywords in the research on urban regeneration and heritage tourism. At the center of the network, heritage tourism and heritage conservation appear as dominant themes, closely connected to a wide range of related concepts such as urban planning, cultural heritage, and tourist destination. The strong linkage between these terms indicates that research in this field heavily focuses on how heritage tourism is intertwined with conservation efforts and urban policies.

Several peripheral clusters highlight more specific topics, such as economic regeneration, local participation, and gentrification, suggesting that recent studies have started to explore the socio-economic impacts of heritage tourism. Additionally, geographical terms like United Kingdom, United States, Italy, and Lisbon show the relevance of place-based studies in this research domain.

Overall, the co-words network demonstrates a well-connected and multi-dimensional research landscape. It indicates that while heritage tourism and conservation remain central, the field is increasingly expanding to address broader issues like urban policy, local community involvement, and regional development strategies. This analysis provides insight into the complex relationships between these keywords and reveals emerging areas of focus that are driving scholarly conversations in urban regeneration and heritage tourism.



**Figure 15: Co-words network**

Source: Authors

### Keywords co-occurrence and clusters

#### Cluster 1: Heritage Tourism and Urban Development

Heritage Tourism and Urban Development discuss diverse perspectives on leveraging heritage assets to enhance urban regeneration, focusing on themes like heritage tourism, urban renewal, and strategic tourism management. A notable emphasis is placed on heritage tourism as a means of transforming cities through the promotion of historical and cultural sites, highlighting how these assets can shape local identity and appeal. For example, McClinchey (2024) study explores street art as a tool for creative place-making, positioning local culture as a tourist draw, though further analysis of long-term economic and social impacts would strengthen its claims. Similarly, Rezaei et al. (2022) examine how heritage tourism can enhance place-making by promoting cultural identity, though the study could expand with examples of sustainable practices in heritage site management. Delconte et al. (2016) highlight the role of local arts agencies in community-driven urban renewal, though this approach could be enhanced by a stronger focus on heritage tourism's role within arts-driven regeneration.

Urban renewal is another recurring theme, as these papers often highlight tourism's role in revitalizing economically or culturally significant urban areas. Ferrari and Guala (2017) study examine how mega-events can transform urban spaces, providing economic boosts and increased visibility, though it lacks an in-depth discussion on the sustainability and preservation of heritage sites post-event. Rezaei (2017) work on resident perceptions of tourism impacts adds insight into how local communities view tourism's effects, suggesting a valuable foundation for future urban renewal projects that balance community needs with tourism growth. This collection of studies collectively underscores the dual impact of tourism on both urban renewal and cultural preservation, yet further exploration of geographic diversity in heritage tourism could broaden the applicability of these findings.

Finally, sustainable development and economic impact emerge as central concerns in these studies, though with some room for deeper quantitative analysis. Rezaei et al. (2022) address tourism management by exploring strategic approaches to balance visitor engagement with site conservation, yet more specific management strategies could provide actionable insights. Additionally, the studies would benefit from quantitative data on economic outcomes, such as job creation and local investment, which are essential to fully understanding tourism's role in sustainable urban development (Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2023; Rezaei et al., 2022). Expanding future research to include more robust case studies and detailed data on socio-economic impacts would create a stronger foundation for sustainable urban growth in heritage-rich regions.

### **Cluster 2: Cultural Influence and Project Management**

Cultural Influence and Project Management offer a range of insights into the role of culture and collaborative project management in urban tourism and regeneration. Nyau and Chin (2023) explore the concept of urban regeneration, focusing on how cultural elements can help revitalize urban areas by highlighting local identities. While the paper provides valuable theoretical insights, it would benefit from more practical, case-specific examples that showcase cultural influence in real-world projects. Similarly, De Liu (2015) examines event-led strategies for cultural tourism, emphasizing how carefully planned events can attract tourists and foster local cultural appreciation. The study could deepen its analysis by assessing the long-term impacts on host communities and detailing how public-private collaborations contribute to sustained success in tourism initiatives (De Liu, 2015).

Stakeholder collaboration is particularly well-addressed by Jung et al. (2015), who emphasize the importance of diverse stakeholder involvement, including government agencies, private stakeholders, and local communities, in cultural heritage tourism. The paper effectively captures the need for collaborative approaches in managing cultural tourism sustainably, positioning it as a standout study within this cluster (Jung et al., 2015). In contrast, Madandola and Boussaa (2023) focus on how cultural heritage tourism can act as a catalyst for sustainable urban development, highlighting the dual benefit of economic growth and tradition preservation. However, the paper would benefit from including practical project management frameworks that illustrate how cities can balance tourism growth with heritage conservation effectively (Madandola & Boussaa, 2023).

Y. D. Liu (2014) contributes valuable insights into the role of cultural events in tourism, discussing how these events enhance the urban tourism landscape by drawing on local culture. While the study effectively positions cultural events as central to tourism, it could benefit from a stronger focus on long-term project management strategies for integrating these events sustainably within broader urban tourism plans (Y. D. Liu, 2014). Overall, while the papers provide useful perspectives on cultural influence, they would benefit from more specific project management models and quantitative data to measure the economic and social impacts of their findings. Expanding future research to include a broader array of case studies and management frameworks could enhance the practical applicability of cultural influence and stakeholder collaboration in sustainable urban tourism.

### **Cluster 3: Regeneration and Sustainability**

Studies on urban regeneration highlight its role in promoting sustainable urban redevelopment by incorporating green infrastructure, energy-efficient designs, and resource optimization, making cities more resilient and environmentally friendly (Tung, 2021; Xi et al., 2024). Sustainable regeneration projects are shown to mitigate urban heat, improve air quality, and support biodiversity through green spaces, contributing positively to urban

environmental health. This approach aligns with broader urban sustainability goals, indicating that cities can grow while minimizing environmental impacts and preserving resources for future generations (Boussaa, 2015b, 2021).

Cultural heritage preservation is another significant focus within urban regeneration, seen as essential for fostering community identity, social cohesion, and tourism appeal (Akpınar Külekçi et al., 2024). While safeguarding historical sites has economic benefits, studies also caution against risks like over-tourism and cultural commodification, which can erode the authenticity of heritage sites (Boussaa, 2015a; Carruthers, 2013). A balanced approach to heritage integration is advised, ensuring protection of cultural assets alongside contemporary urban growth (Carruthers, 2013). Additionally, community involvement and social sustainability are crucial, with participatory planning models that include local residents increasing project acceptance and success (Xi et al., 2024). However, regeneration efforts often lead to challenges like displacement and gentrification, disproportionately impacting low-income residents and raising questions about social equity. Addressing these social sustainability concerns remains a priority for future research, focusing on equitable benefit distribution and minimizing community displacement (Akpınar Külekçi et al., 2024).

#### **Cluster 4: Redevelopment and Gentrification**

The studies critically examine the dynamics between urban redevelopment and the social impacts of gentrification within tourism-centred areas. Redevelopment initiatives often focus on transforming urban spaces to attract tourism and stimulate economic growth, yet this focus can lead to unintended consequences for local communities. Vergara-Constela and Casellas (2016) highlight that while government policies promoting redevelopment boost the economy, they frequently result in rising property values that make housing unaffordable for long-term residents. This economic-driven redevelopment raises concerns about social inclusivity, as communities may feel disconnected from the benefits of these changes, particularly when developments primarily serve tourists rather than local needs.

Gentrification emerges as a significant challenge in this cluster, often displacing residents and reshaping neighbourhood identities. Imai (2012) and Kowalczyk-Anioł (2023) demonstrate how rising property prices and changes in local businesses can displace original residents, transforming areas into spaces that cater to affluent visitors and altering the neighbourhood's cultural essence. This shift underscores the tension in urban regeneration, where economic revitalization may come at the cost of cultural dilution. To address these issues, Engstrom (2015) and others advocate for more sustainable redevelopment strategies, including diversified economic models that reduce reliance on tourism and policy measures like rent control and community involvement in planning. These inclusive approaches aim to balance economic growth with cultural preservation and social equity, ensuring that the benefits of redevelopment extend to all residents (Engstrom, 2015; Imai, 2012; Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2023).

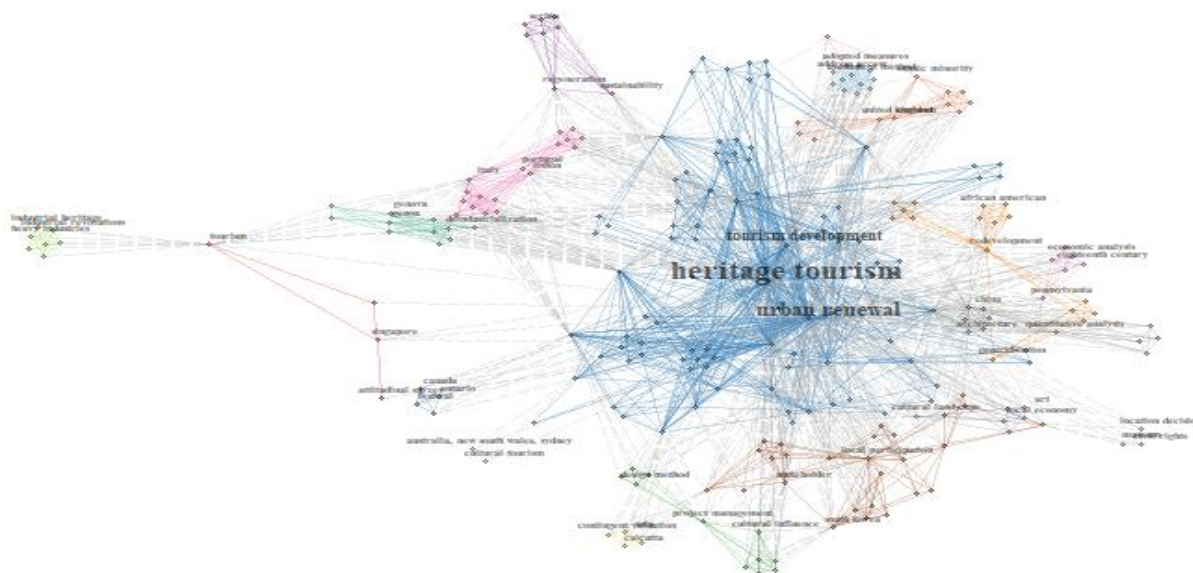
#### **Cluster 5: Local Participation and Stakeholder Engagement**

The review underscores the critical importance of stakeholder engagement and local participation in urban regeneration, especially within the heritage tourism sector. Involving local-residents in the planning and implementation stages helps to align projects with community values and needs, fostering a sense of ownership. Park et al. (2017) argue that when residents actively participate, they are more likely to support tourism-driven development, enhancing the long-term stability of urban regeneration. This inclusive approach can reduce potential social conflicts, creating a foundation of support that sustains both economic growth and social cohesion.

Diverse stakeholder engagement is also emphasized, as successful regeneration requires collaboration between residents, government agencies, businesses, and cultural organizations. Jung et al. (2015) illustrate that different stakeholder groups often have conflicting goals—such as the need for economic growth versus cultural preservation—which requires structured collaboration to manage. This balance is especially important in heritage tourism, where maintaining cultural identity is essential to preserving the authenticity that attracts visitors. However, as Shaolian (2017) warns, prioritizing economic goals over cultural preservation can lead to gentrification, potentially eroding the local cultural fabric and alienating residents.



The studies also highlight the unique context of heritage tourism in developing countries, where urban regeneration can serve as a powerful tool for economic and social improvement. Nyau and Chin (2023) stress that in these regions, local participation is crucial to ensure that benefits are equitably shared and that external investors do not dominate projects. They advocate for adaptable policies that empower communities, positioning heritage tourism as a means of social empowerment and sustainable economic development. However, challenges such as power imbalances and tokenistic community involvement remain, indicating a need for further research into frameworks that balance stakeholder influence and promote meaningful local engagement in developing contexts (Nyau & Chin, 2023).



**Figure 16: Keywords co-occurrence and clusters**

Source: Authors

## DISCUSSION

This bibliometric analysis highlights critical trends, themes, and gaps in the scholarly discourse on urban regeneration and heritage tourism (UR-HT) over the past three decades. The findings emphasize the evolving focus on sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and the balance between tourism-driven economic growth and cultural preservation, underscoring the complex interplay between these domains (García, 2004; Timothy & Boyd, 2006).

The identification of five research clusters-Heritage Tourism and Urban Development, Cultural Influence and Project Management, Regeneration and Sustainability, Redevelopment and Gentrification, and Local Participation and Stakeholder Engagement, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intellectual landscape of the field. These clusters reveal an interdisciplinary focus, with contributions from urban planning, tourism studies, and cultural heritage management (Boussaa, 2015b; Jung et al., 2015). However, the discussion of these clusters also highlights key areas requiring further exploration and refinement.

### Thematic Clusters and Methodological Gaps

While the study effectively synthesizes thematic clusters, a predominant reliance on qualitative methodologies is evident across the reviewed literature. Clusters such as "Regeneration and Sustainability" and "Local Participation and Stakeholder Engagement" underscore the importance of balancing economic growth with social equity and environmental sustainability (Boussaa & Madandola, 2024; Rezaei et al., 2022). However, many studies lack robust empirical analyses or longitudinal designs to substantiate their findings. For example, the limited use of quantitative approaches, such as contingent valuation or impact assessment models, restricts the generalizability and practical applicability of research outcomes. This methodological gap hinders a deeper understanding of the long-term socio-economic and environmental impacts of heritage tourism on urban

regeneration.

### **Geographic Disparities in Research**

The bibliometric analysis reveals a Western-centric research bias, with the majority of influential studies originating from developed economies in Europe and North America. While these regions offer valuable insights into heritage tourism's role in urban transformation, they do not fully address the unique challenges and opportunities present in underrepresented regions, particularly in the Global South. For instance, regions such as Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia remain underexplored, despite their rich cultural heritage and growing urban regeneration needs (Lak et al., 2020; Nyau & Chin, 2023; Orts-Cardador et al., 2024). Expanding the geographic scope of future research could provide comparative perspectives and reveal context-specific strategies for sustainable urban regeneration.

### **Collaboration and Knowledge Production**

The study highlights a growing trend of international collaborations, as evidenced by co-authorship networks and multiple-country publications (MCPs). This trend reflects an increasing recognition of the interdisciplinary and global nature of UR-HT research (Bhowmik, 2021). However, a closer examination of collaboration networks reveals that partnerships are often confined to academic institutions in developed countries. Encouraging collaborations with researchers and institutions in the Global South could foster more inclusive knowledge production and enhance the applicability of research findings in diverse socio-economic contexts (Rezaei et al., 2022).

### **Sustainability and Inclusivity in Urban Regeneration**

The findings emphasize a growing academic focus on sustainability and inclusivity as guiding principles for heritage tourism and urban regeneration. Clusters such as "Regeneration and Sustainability" and "Local Participation and Stakeholder Engagement" highlight the potential of heritage tourism to serve as a catalyst for sustainable urban development (Jung et al., 2015; Rezaei et al., 2022). However, the literature also underscores the risks of over-tourism, gentrification, and cultural commodification, which can undermine local identities and social cohesion (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Addressing these challenges requires the integration of participatory planning models, where local communities play an active role in decision-making processes. Furthermore, future research should explore innovative governance frameworks that balance the interests of diverse stakeholders while ensuring equitable benefit distribution.

### **Emerging Research Areas and Future Directions**

Several emerging research areas identified in the co-words network, such as adaptive reuse, smart tourism technologies, and green urban infrastructure, offer promising avenues for future exploration (Xi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021). The integration of technological innovations, such as digital heritage tools and smart city frameworks, could revolutionize how urban regeneration projects are designed and implemented (Trinchini & Spyriadis, 2019). Additionally, further investigation into the socio-economic impacts of heritage tourism, supported by robust quantitative data, could enhance our understanding of its role in fostering inclusive and resilient cities (Chen, 2023).

In summary, while this bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the UR-HT research landscape, it also highlights significant gaps and opportunities. Addressing these gaps through interdisciplinary, data-driven, and globally inclusive research efforts will be critical in advancing the field and promoting sustainable urban transformation.

## **CONCLUSION**

This bibliometric analysis provides a robust and detailed overview of urban regeneration and heritage tourism research, charting the evolution of key themes, influential publications, and collaborative networks over the past three decades. The study successfully identifies five core research clusters-Heritage Tourism and Urban Development, Cultural Influence and Project Management, Regeneration and Sustainability, Redevelopment

and Gentrification, and Local Participation and Stakeholder Engagement-that collectively encapsulate primary concerns in this domain. The emphasis on sustainability and stakeholder engagement reflects the field's growing commitment to balancing tourism-driven economic growth with social and environmental responsibilities.

One of the main contributions of this study is its identification of prominent journals and authors, reinforcing the role of interdisciplinary platforms that helps in shaping research agendas. Such insights from various studies, are essential for both new and established scholars, guiding them toward high-impact outlets and collaboration opportunities within the field (Brito & Zarrilli, 2023; Lak et al., 2020; Orts-Cardador et al., 2024; Stuart, 2018). The paper also underscores the significant influence of foundational works, such as those by Timothy and Urry, which continue to inform current debates on cultural commodification and heritage preservation in urban settings (Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Urry, 2002).

Despite these strengths, this analysis reveals several critical gaps. First, the field's methodological landscape remains predominantly qualitative, with limited integration of data-driven methods such as longitudinal studies and quantitative impact assessments. Future research could benefit from more empirical approaches, as these would offer clearer insights into the long-term socio-economic and environmental effects of heritage tourism on urban areas (Rezaei et al., 2022). Second, while Western countries dominate research output, studies on urban regeneration in the Global South remain scarce, leaving unexamined a range of culturally and economically diverse perspectives. Expanding the geographic scope of research to include cities in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia could enrich the discourse with insights into how different cultural contexts shape urban regeneration strategies (Lak et al., 2020).

In summary, this bibliometric analysis reinforces the pivotal role of heritage tourism in urban regeneration, emphasizing the need for sustainable, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches. The findings underscore a call for more comprehensive methodologies, international collaborations, and interdisciplinary frameworks to deepen our understanding of heritage tourism's potential as a catalyst for urban transformation. This research provides a valuable roadmap for future studies, highlighting the importance of quantitative assessments, global diversity, and the integration of advanced bibliometric tools to capture the full complexity and impact of heritage tourism on cities worldwide.

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