CULTURAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND URBAN HERITAGE TOURISM

Abstract:

The paper explains a cultural political economy "framing" for interpreting heritage tourism in urban contexts. Key ideas behind this research perspective are explained and illustrated through discussion of past research studies of urban heritage tourism. It is underpinned by a relational view of the inter-connectedness of societal relations, and an emphasis on taking seriously both the cultural/semiotic and the economic/political in the co-constitution of urban heritage tourism's social practices and features. A case study of heritage tourism in Nanjing, China considers cultural political economy's relevance and value, including the distinctive research questions it raises. It reveals, for example, how economic relations in the built environment were related to tourist meaning-making and identities in the cultural/semiotic sphere.

Keywords: Heritage, urban, research framing, cultural political economy, meaning-making, representations.

1. INTRODUCTION

How we "frame" our research in a subject area in broad theoretical and conceptual terms is important for our understanding of that subject and the questions we ask about it. It shapes our views about "what matters and what does not, behind which lie ideas about how things work" (Harding & Blokland, 2014, p. 13; Bramwell, 2015). The paper explains, applies and also evaluates one theoretical and conceptual "framing" for the study of heritage tourism in urban contexts: cultural political economy (CPE). It seeks to respond to Ashworth and Page's (2011, p. 2) call for more theoretically-informed research on urban tourism, including urban heritage tourism, that "situates urban tourism in a more explicit theoretical context, and thus remedies a persistent weakness in many forms of tourism research that remain case study driven and implicitly descriptive in manner". Ideas related to CPE are beginning to be used in urban heritage tourism research (Park, 2014; Su & Teo, 2009), but there is a place for a systematic and rigorous assessment of its relevance, application and value.

Heritage tourism can be important in cities and towns due to their concentrations of heritage resources and also because these urban centres attract many visitors (Murphy & Boyle, 2006; Selby, 2004a; Law, 2002). Many tourists visit urban places primarily for reasons other than their heritage resources, perhaps because they act as gateways to tourist regions or have excellent retail and entertainment facilities, but the tourists may then engage in heritage tourism-related activities. Yet heritage resources can be a notable attraction for urban tourists. Cities and towns often have a long history of economic and socio-cultural activity, and of mercantile or capitalist power, and this can leave a notable legacy of historic buildings and cityscapes or townscapes. Cities and towns are "dense agglomerations of people and economic activities" (Scott & Storper, 2015, p. 4), and

they often have rich accumulated economic, socio-cultural and political histories. The "urban encounter of art, culture, technology and organization" (Rossi, 2017, p. 43) means that cities tend to be "multifaceted physical, relational and governmental space[s]" (Rossi & Vanolo, 2012, p. 18) that can draw many tourists to them. The paper focuses on how CPE may provide new insights into heritage tourism activities in urban contexts.

A CPE "framing" emphasises two ideas about how we study urban heritage tourism's subject matter. It indicates, first, that an understanding of urban heritage tourism requires us to consider its inter-relationships, including with its societal context. It provides a broad perspective which seeks to understand relationships between entities, processes and context, rather than considering them in isolation. It suggests that urban heritage tourism's relationships are co-constituting, and that they involve intimate interrelations between human agency and structural processes.

It is premised, second, on the idea that urban heritage tourism reflects important relationships between the economic/political and the cultural/semiotic. CPE represents a direct response to criticisms of political economy sometimes being insufficiently concerned with culture and semiotics, and of cultural perspectives which can pay insufficient attention to the economy, thus neglecting the materiality of social relations. Based on a review of CPE studies in urban research, Ribera-Fumaz (2009, p. 453) argues that they seek either "a cultural perspective on the city that also takes material-economic matters seriously and/or a political economy that recognizes the limits of purely materialistic accounts of urban processes". A CPE approach to urban heritage tourism seeks to seriously engage with the socio-cultural determinants of material change, and also the material determinants of societal change. It represents a response to Bianchi's (2009, p. 498) assertion that tourism research needs to be "simultaneously sensitive to the plural subjectivities and cultural diversities within contemporary societies and grounded in a structural analysis of the material forces of power and inequality within globalizing capitalism and liberalized modes of tourism development".

The importance of taking seriously the cultural/semiotic and economic/political dimensions, and their inter-connections, might seem self-evident, but studies of urban heritage tourism, as in other social science subject areas, can be one-sided in terms of a selective emphasis on just one or a few dimensions, and there may be limited consideration of the interrelations between dimensions.

The paper, first, explains key ideas behind a CPE "framing" and it illustrates how some have been applied in past research studies on urban heritage tourism. The account focuses on the significance of economic and political relationships, and also of cultural and semiotic relationships (including meaning-making and representations), for the co-constitution of social practices and features associated with heritage tourism in cities. The paper, second, applies CPE ideas to case study examples of heritage tourism in Nanjing, China. The examples examine CPE's relevance and value, including the distinctive research questions it raises. The examples were selected to assess differing aspects of CPE relations between the economic/political and the cultural/semiotic, and to evaluate them at differing urban

geographical scales.

2. URBAN HERITAGE TOURISM AND CPE

The paper first explains some central notions behind CPE thinking, illustrating them using examples drawn from previous urban heritage tourism research.

2.1 A relational view of urban heritage tourism

A CPE research perspective directs attention to the relational inter-connections in society and between urban heritage tourism and society (Brincat, 2010; Chang, Milne, Fallon & Pohlmann, 1996; Mosedale, 2011). These interconnections for urban heritage tourism include those between social processes, personal strategies, and activities, and between these and their societal context. They also span geographical scales between the local, regional and global.

The relational and often reciprocal ties around urban heritage tourism also bring together the differing social spheres of life. According to CPE thinking, these relations should not be seen as involving separate spheres; rather, they can be identified as either more largely "economic", "cultural", "political" or "social" (Moran, 2014). Starting with the "economic", this is usually considered to concern the production and consumption of resources, and their distribution and circulation. "Culture" represents the meaning-making features that animate our ways of living, such as our beliefs, values, representations, social meanings and senses of self. Here the cultural as meaning-making involves semiotic processes, so that the term "cultural/semiotic" might be used. Next, the "political" sphere concerns activities associated with the distribution of power and decision-making, including cooperation and struggle around those activities; and the "social" concerns people's interactions and what they do collectively.

A CPE "framing" suggests that the societal inter-connections around urban heritage tourism "are often intertwined and co-constitutive" (Moran, 2014, p. 3). This is because relevant processes and entities, although they are not reducible to each other, are porous and embody relationships in their wider context. Thus, varied socio-cultural, economic and political processes and their interactions with the environment will co-constitute the particular character of, say, a heritage precinct or a city museum visited by tourists (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007; Castree, 2003; Harvey, 1996; Sum & Jessop, 2015). The intertwined and co-constituting relations between social spheres is evident in the influence of capitalist neo-liberalism on urban developments (Rossi & Vanolo, 2012). Thus, Barnett (2005) sees neo-liberalism simultaneously as a mode of regulation in the economic and political spheres; a discursive-moral governmental rationality in the cultural/semiotic sphere; and a reflection of long-term rhythms in the social and cultural spheres.

In the social sciences interpretations differ around the relative influence of differing social spheres of life on contemporary society, with neo-Marxist political economists often seeing the economic and political as highly influential, while cultural studies researchers can suggest that culture is the key (Harding & Blokland,

2014). CPE seeks to bring these perspectives together by evaluating the relative influence of differing societal spheres in specific circumstances and contexts. This aspect of societal relations, as well as others, are seen as specific to particular geographical and temporal contexts (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007).

Several research studies on urban heritage tourism highlight the value of relational perspectives on the social processes and associated geographical scales that are involved, and on the connections with wider contexts. In a study of heritage tourism in Lijiang Ancient Town, China, Su and Teo (2009) identify interrelated "relationships between global and domestic capital, tourists and locals as they collude, collaborate and contest one another in transforming the town for tourist consumption" (p. 1). They emphasise "the interplay of production and consumption with tourism politics. The production and consumption of heritage tourism are intertwined, with each affecting the other" (p. 46). Similarly, from an investigation of residents' attitudes in an historic hutong district of Beijing, Gu and Ryan (2008) found that their research questions relating mainly to tourism-induced change were limiting, because "the hutong is experiencing change as Beijing is also changing around it. The hutong is linked to the wider Beijing economy and the social, economic and political changes that are occurring are not solely due to tourism" (p. 646).

A CPE lens suggests that the inter-weaving of societal relations embodies both interdependencies and tensions. In a study of heritage tourism in Europe's historic cities, Richards (1996, p. 262 & p. 268) notes important temporal trends associated with evolving interdependencies and tensions between the expansion of "the 'new classes', who are the predominant consumers of heritage", "the production of heritage commodities", and the growing "real values of capital accumulation and real estate development" in these cities. Interdependencies and tensions for the residents of heritage towns or historic districts of cities have been noted by Novy and Colomb (2017), with some residents regarding local tourism development in broadly favourable terms, but for others it can cause dissent and can be an increasingly politicised issue.

2.2 The economy/political and cultural/semiotic, and their interrelations

CPE emphasises the need to take seriously both the cultural/semiotic and the economic/political spheres. Both are involved in all aspects of urban heritage tourism, but with precise relations between these spheres varying in different situations. According to Ribera-Fumaz (2009, p. 455), "CPE is clearly attempting to find a synergy between the economic and cultural spheres rather than attempting one-sidedly to incorporate culture into political economy or *vice versa*" (Dannestam, 2008; Harvey, 2012; Jessop & Sum, 2000). It seeks to fully consider both culture and economy as well as the interrelationships between them, thus challenging notions of their mutual exclusivity (Moran, 2014). Jessop & Sum (2017, p. 346) claim that societal relations "can be studied from either a semiotic or structural entry-point but, sooner or later, its other moment must be integrated". They are

suggesting here that taking seriously the cultural/semiotic and economic/political may start with either of these dimensions, but that it is necessary to return to the other dimensions and their interconnections (Moran, 2014; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009; Staricco, 2017).

The emphasis on taking seriously these broad social spheres responds to criticisms that extreme forms of political economy can be insufficiently concerned with culture, meaning-making and semiotics, and that radical forms of cultural research can pay insufficient attention to the economy, thereby neglecting the materiality of social relations. Colomb (2012, p. 23) contends, for example, that in the field of urban research "the Marxist and neo-Marxist tradition of urban political economy and its materialist-economic outlook did not leave much room for the analysis of 'culture'…and 'symbols'" (Krätke, 2014; Rossi, 2017). This tradition can involve dangers of research that is economically reductive or determinist. On the other hand, cultural research can sometimes regard culture, discourses, and signs and symbols as the key to understanding society, and thus some of this research can be idealist as it pays too little attention to society's material or economic dimensions (Dannestam, 2008; Harvey, 2012; Jessop & Sum, 2000; Zukin, 2012). While Lash and Urry (1994, p. 143) argue that "Critique today must be launched primarily from the cultural precisely because social life today is increasingly culture laden", CPE indicates that the other social spheres, including the economic/political, remain highly important and must be fully integrated in our analyses.

Taking full account of both the economic/political and cultural/semiotic involves recognising "both the cultural and the economic, and immaterial and material processes as co-constitutive of social relations" (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009, p. 455; Jessop, 2010; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008), and indeed that all social spheres are intertwined through co-constitutive practices and processes. Social relations and practices are co-constituted simultaneously by economic/political and also cultural/semiotic processes. Thus, social relations and practices, including those influenced by gender, ethnicity and age, are interwoven with, and co-constituted by, the different social spheres. Many consider these to be dialectical inter-relationships.

Studies explicitly integrating economic/political and cultural/semiotic dimensions are beginning to appear in urban heritage tourism research. Notably, a study by Su and Teo (2009, p. 4) argues for a "cultural materialist approach favoring the interweaving of culture and economy in understanding politics and social change". Their study of Lijiang's heritage tourism suggests that the town's heritage environments and representations were shaped by production and consumption processes, and by political processes around the relative influence of tourism agencies, residents, tourists and the media. It is contended that these environments and representations were outcomes of an "ongoing dialogue between producers and consumers of heritage tourism that have been affected not only by economics but also by politics and culture" (p. 25).

2.3   Agency and structure, and their interrelations

CPE perspectives seek to avoid structuralist and voluntarist explanations through a relational consideration of agency-structure interactions. The structuralist position indicates that structures determine significant behaviour, while voluntarism is predicated on the view that individual human agents, pursuing freely chosen courses of action, lie at the root of causal explanation. CPE attempts to reconcile these two positions by asserting that there are structural pressures – including both opportunities and constraints – but that people interpret them based on their own perceptions and values, and that they respond to them in their own performed actions. They are not entirely free in how they respond, but nevertheless their agency transforms the social structures (Bramwell, 2006). The relational interactions between the agency of actors and the structural context, including interdependencies and tensions, can result in evolution and change: and thus it provides an historical dynamic (Harvey, 1996). While discussions at higher levels of abstraction can imply that entities such as cities have agency, and advocates of actor-network perspectives explicitly assign agency to physical objects, many researchers assign agency only to individuals and social groups (Harding & Blokland, 2014).

Some structural approaches can rely too much on macro-explanations and on metanarratives, thus ignoring the influence of the micro-processes of human agency, while some radical cultural approaches see individual subjective experiences as the only way of knowing about society, celebrate the associated differences for their own sake, and thus they can disavow all metanarratives. Here the concern of CPE to integrate agency and structure may help to bridge the gap between structural-determinist explanations and cultural relativism and the rejection of metanarratives (Bianchi, 2009; Staricco, 2017).

The importance of examining the relations between agency and structure processes in particular circumstances for heritage tourism research is noted by Jamal and Kim (2005). They argue that this research should examine both larger structural processes and the micro-scale processes of agency, seeking the integration of "micro-individual and macro-contextual aspects of heritage and tourism" (p. 73).

Some research on urban heritage tourism is explicit in its consideration of agency-structure relationships. Mordue (2005), for example, examines how heritage in the city of York in Northeast England was "performed, evaluated, and contested" by individual tourists, tourism brokers and locals (p. 179). He considers that the "local tourism performances are specific yet mediated by global processes" at a macro-scale, and thus he "examined the wider influences on the stories told" by his interview respondents (p. 184-5). Some urban heritage tourism research explores why actors resist societal structural pressures. Yeoh (2005, p. 953) assesses how the government's designation of Singapore's Kampong Glam Historical District as a conservation area "sparked controversial discussions in some quarters among the Malay/Muslim community as to what constitutes 'Malay heritage and culture'". According to Yeoh, this illustrates how such symbolic state designations are not always hegemonic, "but constantly inflected, unsettled and challenged by the possibility of alternative readings on the part of others" (p. 952). Selby (2004b, p.

191) also argues that in urban contexts both residents and "tourists are dynamic social actors, interpreting and embodying experience, whilst also creating meaning and new realities through their actions". Yet he further recognises that individual actors inter-subjectively negotiate their responses in relation to the social mores and beliefs of others, and that "Rather than over-emphasizing human agency, individuals have elements that are unalterable and closed, and elements that are open to manipulation" (p. 193).

2.4   Production, consumption and identity

A CPE perspective suggests that tourists in urban heritage environments are not passive consumers of "products" within a uni-directional relationship between producer and consumer; rather, the producer-consumer relationships are circular and inter-connected (Khirfan, 2014; Liang & Bao, 2015; Zukin, 2012). Hence, the nature of the tourist product or experience can be seen as "a negotiated outcome in which the product is continuously reproduced in light of shifting tastes, preferences and even meanings that are expressed by consumers through the process of consumption" (Williams, 2009, p. 21). Urban heritage products are co-created by their producers (past and current actors) and consumers (such as residents and visitors) within the urban heritage context. In a study of a heritage precinct in an Australian city, for example, Laing, Wheeler, Reeves and Frost (2014, p. 183) suggest that the tourist experiences are co-created by both providers and tourists, with the "destination or tourism provider…[having] the ability to foster, develop or mediate…[the destination] ingredients, which are then combined by each visitor to create a unique and individualised experience".

In the process of consumption of urban heritage products people draw on their beliefs, values and imaginations and they impart meanings and significance to the products, and indeed consumption is a primary mechanism through which people form and project their identity. Richards (1996) asserts that tourists in heritage cities may seek heritage experiences because it offers them signifiers of personal taste, and this may reinforce their sense of identity. Consumer expectations and experiences also feed back into the production of urban heritage products or experiences – as Ashworth (1994, p. 16) notes, these products are "purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption" (Jamal & Kim, 2005). In their study of heritage tourism in the town of Lijiang, China, Su and Teo (2009, p. 121) found that "tourists gaze, touch, and listen to fulfil their imagination" and that "To satisfy tourists, the local government and tourism businesses stage Lijiang's heritage landscapes to conform to the imagination of the tourists".

CPE ideas also suggest that relationships around heritage tourism's production and consumption involve interdependencies and tensions. There are interdependencies, for instance, between urban heritage producers and tourist consumers because they favour heritage products that meet tourist needs, but tensions occur if this is not achieved (Chang & Huang, 2014). There are also interdependencies and potential tensions between the multiple users of urban heritage environments, such as in a renovated historic street between tourists and local residents going to work or shopping, because these environments are rarely

solely produced for, or consumed by, just one user group, such as tourists (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). Tensions can also occur when urban heritage tourism producers seek to present interpretations of the past that tourists dispute or reject (Park, 2014), or between tourists and city residents when tourist numbers grow markedly in the city (Novy & Colomb, 2017; Russo, 2016).

2.5   Meanings, representations and responses

The CPE approach suggests that urban heritage tourism research should examine – alongside the economic and political relations – the cultural and semiotic processes of subjective meaning-making, including people's perceptions, feelings, emotions and experiences (Waterton & Watson, 2013).   Wearing and Foley (2017, p. 98) argue that studies of urban tourist experiences require "a move to develop theoretical approaches that allow us to delve more deeply into the lived complexities of tourism experiences". Such studies should explore people's efforts at meaning-making about the world, efforts that often involve meanings in the semiotic realms of discourses, visual images and other representations (Sum & Jessop, 2015). The CPE lens emphasises how cultural/semiotic representations and meanings reflect both human agency and structural processes. Thus, Wearing and Foley (2017, p. 98) claim that urban tourists' experiences "need to be considered at both micro and macro levels" , which mean "it is essential to consider their experiences, perceptions and activities in the context of the broader political, social and economic environments as these help to create the travel experience".

People differ in how urban heritage tourism affects their meaning-making and values. In the case of tourists' and residents' responses to the physical redevelopment of Singapore River's "working river" environment in Singapore, Chang and Huang (2005, p. 279) note how "some see the need for a city to constantly change so that it remains vibrant, others desire to hold on to select heritage that helps root them to specific locales in a rapidly globalising world" (Hayllar & Griffin, 2005). Such reactions are likely to reflect an interplay between people's feelings and beliefs and the structural influences from their social situation and prevailing meaning systems (Dannestam, 2008).

Semiotic representations, or signs and symbols, of heritage features and associations can be important in the marketing of cities, including for tourism (Ismail, Ahmad & Hamzah, 2008; Smith & Puczkó, 2012). Colomb (2012, p. 21) describes how through city "imaging" a city's "specific local culture(s), history(ies), identity(ies) and aesthetics are selected, sanitized, commodified and marketed to be 'consumed' by target groups such as tourists or high-income residents".   The selection of heritage representations, and the responses to them, are affected by agency-structure relationships. The heritage representations used in city marketing, for example, may not meet with the approval of some city residents, who may feel they are discordant with their senses of local identity (Bailey, Miles & Stark, 2004). In terms of structural processes, Harvey (2012, p. 103) contends that for cities these representations reflect "the power of collective symbolic capital, of special marks of distinction that attach to some place, which have a significant drawing power upon the flows of capital more generally" (Rossi & Vanolo, 2012).

2.6   Power, governance and responses

Bianchi (2009, p. 491) argues that when cultural perspectives in tourism research consider power they tend to focus on how it "permeates the 'micro-practices' of everyday life". While those practices are important, he asserts that this focus only offers a limited understanding because the practices "often appear to be de-coupled from the workings of capitalist economics and wider configurations of institutional power". CPE perspectives, however, often give some prominence to power and they consider it to involve lived relationships that entail both the "micro-practices" of every day feelings and social interactions and also broader social and institutional structures.

Actors vary in terms of their class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality and gender, and they may have different interests and power in relation to heritage tourism in cities. McKercher and du Cros (2002, p. 59) identify several groups of actors interested in heritage tourism in Hong Kong, each with their "different levels of knowledge about the asset, different interests in the asset, different cultural backgrounds, and different expectations". Some actors may gain and some may lose from the processes involved in urban heritage tourism. Dominant political groups, for example, may seek to present heritage resources in cities in ways that help them to maintain their legitimacy and authority. Here Park (2016, p. 116) argues that heritage tourism "is often a deliberate and manipulative selection and modification of the past to meet governing political and ideological frameworks".

Different actors, social groups and institutions may have differential power in relation to the governance, or "steering" and coordination, of urban heritage tourism (Fainstein, Hoffman & Judd, 2003; Harvey, 2012; Henderson, 2007; Suntikul & Jachna, 2013). Khirfan (2014) observes that in Middle Eastern developing countries it can often be national agencies that control the development and marketing of primary heritage attractions in cities, and that this can minimise local residents' input into heritage tourism planning and also give prominence to national state "collective universalisms" over the particularisms of local values. A CPE perspective suggests that the governance of urban heritage tourism will reflect both structural power relationships and human agency. Thus, for example, the prevailing policies and values associated with a governing regime can be reinterpreted and challenged by people's alternative beliefs and responses (Russo, 2016).

2.7   Commodification and responses

A CPE perspective directs attention to how historical legacies are commodified and how this relates to inter-connections between the economic/political and the cultural/semiotic. Tourism commodification of urban historical legacies involves the legacies becoming valued for their exchange value rather than their use value. The use values of past legacies arise from people's cultural meanings around such things as collective memory and senses of authenticity, and they are myriad and often idiosyncratic. By contrast, exchange values are uniform as they are determined by

the economic relationships of money (Harvey, 2014; Žižek, 1989). Commodification of historical legacies for tourism in urban contexts is often associated with the perpetually evolving "collective common" created through residents' daily lives and experiences. People create this "collective common" and it provides frameworks in the city through which they can live and support their livelihoods. This can become non-collective and commodified, however, due to market exchanges and valuations. Harvey (2012, p. 74) argues that "The ambience and attractiveness of a city, for example, is a collective product of its citizens, but it is the tourist trade that commercially capitalizes upon that common". A CPE perspective can encourage consideration of inter-relationships between different social spheres in the commodification of this urban "collective common".

3.   APPLICATION TO NANJING, CHINA

The analysis now applies CPE ideas to a case study of heritage tourism in Nanjing, China.   The case study is used to assess CPE's relevance and value, including the distinctive research questions it raises.

Nanjing is a highly-developed city in eastern China's Yangtze River metropolitan area, located about 300 km from Shanghai. It has a rich cultural past and prominent historical standing as China's capital city for periods during the Six Dynasties (220–589), Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and Republican (1919–1949) eras (Nanjing Tourism Bureau, 2004). Nanjing has many cultural resources and it is a major tourist city. Nanjing Tourism Bureau (2013) indicates that during the research period, 2011-12, it attracted 79 million domestic tourists and 1.07 million international tourists. Its 2011 tourism industry revenues were 110.6 billion RMB, 18% of the city's economy (Nanjing Statistics Department, 2012).

China's heritage tourism has been affected by major changes over recent decades in the country's economy, society and politics. Marketization has become important, alongside the continuing strength of the state sector and the Chinese Communist Party. Consumerism and social stratification have also been increasing (Sofield & Li, 1998). China's domestic tourism has grown markedly, encouraged by marketization, increasing incomes and rising aspirations to consume tourist experiences. At the same time, the state has at times continued to disseminate messages supportive of the Chinese Communist Party, including through heritage tourism (Yan & Bramwell, 2008).

The two examples of Nanjing's heritage tourism were selected to examine differing relationships among the economic/political and the cultural/semiotic. They were also chosen to evaluate these relationships at different geographical scales in the city: for a single heritage tourism facility or site in the city, and for a precinct or city district.

The case study assessment draws on hermeneutic and realist research perspectives, while recognising the associated tensions because of their epistemological differences about what counts as knowledge and how it is gained (Harding & Blokland, 2014). Hermeneutics highlights actors' subjective personal

interpretations and meanings, as well as language, texts and behaviour, and it can be favoured by researchers particularly interested in agency and the cultural sphere. Realism calls for both empirical observation and the need to uncover underlying causal mechanisms through the use of conceptual ideas, and it is often employed by researchers interested in structural processes (Jessop, 2010; Lash & Urry, 1994).

Data collection took place between February–April 2011 and also May–June 2012. It was broadly conceived to consider Nanjing's heritage tourism activities in relational terms for the producers and tourists and their experiences, and the associated inter-dependencies and tensions. The second period of data collection focused on providing more in-depth understanding of fewer case studies of the city's heritage tourism-related activities and sites.

Varied data types concerning Nanjing's heritage tourism were examined so as to reveal insights into cultural/discursive and politico-economic phenomena, into agency and structural processes, and their interrelations. There was analysis of policies, plans, annual reports, official websites, promotional materials and newspapers, and ethnographic observations were made at heritage sites, including through photographs. Tourists' comments on Weibo websites for heritage attractions and on TripAdvisor were also examined for tourists' experiences and responses.

Semi-structured interviews were also used to explore the subjective views of heritage tourism-related managers and of tourists at heritage sites. The managers interviewed were carefully spread across the heritage, tourism, public and private sectors, while the tourists were interviewed at the city's heritage attractions. In the first phase of data collection, 32 government officials, heritage managers and heritage/tourism experts, and 31 tourists were interviewed; and in the second phase, a further 14 relevant officials/managers and 8 tourists were interviewed. The interview questions were non-directive and open-ended to allow respondents to frame and express their opinions in their own way.

The early stage of examining the collected data sought to gain a hermeneutic appreciation of the concerns, views, everyday meanings and behaviour associated with heritage tourism. Subsequent analytical steps combined this with a realist approach to conceptually-mediated analysis in order to uncover underlying regularities and causal processes. The analysis here involved developing conjectures about the mechanisms behind observed patterns, how they worked, and whether and how they were activated. One analytical aspect concerned assessing the discursive storylines used by actors to construct their responses to heritage tourism, responses which could affect their actions and relationships (Waterton, 2013).

The steps toward explanation entailed an iterative process of thinking and interpretation between the case study materials and the CPE ideas identified in the research literature. This continuing dialogue followed Miles and Huberman's (1994, p. 10) guidelines on qualitative data analysis as a process of "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming" information in order to develop conceptual interpretations. New research questions and interpretations emerged

from this iterative interplay between empirical evidence and the theoretical perspective. Throughout this process the researchers sought to be questioning, critical, and reflexively self-critical.

The discussion of each example examines two issues: the relevance of CPE and the new interpretations it provides; and the potentially useful research questions and research directions that CPE suggests. The consideration of these issues for the case study examples provides analytical ideas and insights that can assist other researchers applying CPE to urban heritage tourism in other contexts.

4. ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND MEANINGS IN A HERITAGE PRECINCT

The first example is of Nanjing's Confucian temple heritage precinct, which attracts large tourist numbers. Based on CPE ideas, consideration is given to economic relations in the built environment and how they relate to the cultural and semiotic issues of tourist meaning-making. The analysis also considers both structural and agency processes and their connections. Potential directions for research on these inter-relationships based on a CPE perspective are also suggested.

Nanjing's Confucian Temple precinct includes a Confucius Temple and an imperial examination hall dating to the Song dynasty (960-1279). The temple was originally built in 1034, but subsequently it was rebuilt and extended, with its main hall being a shrine to Confucius. The examination hall was built in 1168 for examinees to write essays for the imperial civil examination system (Kesey, 2007). The temple surrounds were once extensive, and this area's physical and built environment has developed commercially, so that today its streets are full of tourist-related shops, including restaurants, snack bars, tea cafes, and souvenir shops. There are also many tourist hotels nearby.

CPE draws attention to, among other things, the structural economic processes behind urban environments. Understanding of the precinct's tourist development can be enhanced through consideration of the economic importance of proximity to the Confucian Temple as a non-replicable item of the city's "collective common". Harvey (2012, p. 90) suggests that monopoly rents are a key influence on the commercial development of such heritage precincts, with these arising "because social actors can realize an enhanced income stream over an extended time by virtue of their exclusive control over some directly or indirectly tradable item which is in some crucial respects unique and non-replicable". Here he argues that capital can appropriate surpluses from concentrations within parts of cities of heritage and cultural elements or "collective common". He observes how often "it is the tourist trade that commercially capitalizes upon that common to extract monopoly rents" (p. 74). The ability of property owners and businesses to secure monopoly rents in the Confucian Temple precinct derived from their monopoly of the physical location and the historic physical infrastructure and associations (Gotham, 2005; Tretter, 2009). Meethan (1996, p. 334) similarly notes within tourist-historic cities the "emergence of new spaces of consumption that are dependent on the attraction of a heritage theme for their economic viability".

A central argument of the CPE approach is that entities are co-constituted through different social spheres, and here there is ample evidence of inter-connections between the precinct's economic vitality and cultural and semiotic processes. Harvey (2012, p. 103), for example, considers that the extraction of monopoly rents in cities also often depends on "historical narratives, interpretations and meanings of collective memories, significations of cultural practices, and the like", and thus it is "as much an outcome of discursive constructions…as…[it is] grounded in material fact". In the Confucian Temple precinct the area's historic associations are echoed in the architectural features used in its commercial gentrification, which are "in the style of the Ming and Qing" dynasties (Travel China Guide, 2015). They are also reflected in souvenirs on sale there, and in narrative accounts of the area in guidebooks and on websites. Further research could usefully explore how cultural signs and symbols and economic commodification in the precinct's cityscape and tourist-related artefacts and narratives drew on and reinforced the precinct's unique Confucian Temple connections.

CPE focuses attention on human responses and agency as well as on structural relations. In this example case there were differing responses to the precinct according to people's personal preferences and agency, which often related to whether or not they regarded its retail emphasis positively.

On the one hand, many tourists who were interviewed, and many social media comments, suggested that visitors were often content or happy with the precinct. Many people simply commented positively on its opportunities to "buy some souvenirs for our friends", and on the "many options for food and shops". Others just explained that they "tried many snacks in the Confucius Temple area", or that they "really like some of the street food there, such as salted duck, duck blood soup with vermicelli and Nanjing dumplings". One commented that the shops and restaurants near the Confucian Temple "help to provide the basic services needed for tourists". Some international tourists also enjoyed the area's character. One 2010 TripAdvisor review by an international tourist commented rather playfully on how the precinct:

> "has a nice atmosphere and there's plenty of people hanging out there. There are lots and lots of shops selling all sorts of tat. Of course there is the obligatory Mac Donalds [McDonald's] plus Hagan Daas [Häagen-Dazs] ice-cream parlour. The Burger King has disappeared but they are half way through replacing it with a Pizza Hut (as of May 2010). There isn't much [of] a temple feel about the place but it's still a nice place to go to for a few hours especially if you want to pick up some ripped off Crocs or T Shirts with meaningless English on the front or a burger/pizza."

On the other hand, at times the precinct invoked tensions for some tourists, notably around their cultural and aesthetic values and sensitivities (Gotham, 2005). Some respondents, and also social media comments, indicated that tourists sometimes considered there was excessive tourist commercialization here that clashed with their personal meaning-making. A domestic tourist complained that the

"Confucius Temple should be an old examination hall according to my previous understanding and knowledge from books. However, there are many shops selling low quality clothes, and restaurants without good hygiene standards. It is a pity that there is this strong commercial atmosphere".

Another domestic tourist complained that the precinct "was just a big shopping street with a strong commercial atmosphere". A tourist from Wuxi city was disappointed about the precinct's fast food chain restaurants, such as McDonald's, which he considered out of keeping with the environment. He complained that:

"There is nothing but selling clothes or inferior tourism souvenirs at the Confucius Temple. Too much commercialization damages the genuine environment in the Confucius Temple. I have no interest in visiting this place any more. Although Nanjing city government has invested in re-developing the ancient style of building there, the fake design of the buildings does not match the surrounding environment, and it does not provide an authentic experience".

Tourist reactions to the precinct's economic commodification were related to tourists' cultural meaning-making and identities, such as in relation to their expectations of authenticity, again illustrating the mutual constitution of tourist experiences of urban heritage through economic and cultural/semiotic processes. The precinct illustrates some commentators' arguments that there can be growing tensions for domestic tourists in China around socio-cultural authenticity issues. Sofield and Li (1998, p. 386) suggest that "in many instances heritage in China has been commoditized to the point where a balance with historical and sociocultural veracity has been lost". Many cities in China have also developed heritage precincts with commercial shopping and food retailing, so the Temple precinct partly reflects a "serial reproduction" of this form of development that can reduce the heterogeneity sought by some tourists (Hall, 2013). One Nanjing-based tourism academic agreed that "the Confucius Temple area has been criticized for its commercialization, which means it has lost its authenticity, and negatively affected local people's everyday lives". Yet, he also argued that historically there had always been retailing in the area, so "I do believe a certain level of commercialization reflects the business history of the Confucian Temple area".

The precinct illustrates CPE's assertions that explanations of production cannot do without explanations of consumption, and also that structures and agency are intimately interrelated. The emergence of this commercial heritage precinct reflects how the culture of everyday life is not simply a demand created by capital, nor even a consumer preference, but also entails active cultural practices behind the creation of people's identities and identifications. The explanation of commercial heritage development is about tourists and not just a matter of broad processes. And, while it reflects the broad consumption preferences of China's growing affluent population, it involves many individualised consumption expectations and experiences.

Further research on the precinct based on CPE ideas could evaluate the potential multiple inter-connections between production and consumption and structure and agency that might be associated with tourists' consumption tastes and experiences.   It might consider co-creation of the precinct's heritage tourism by local residents, tourism businesses, government and tourists. Another research direction would be to assess whether consumption of this commercial heritage space adds to tourists' cultural capital and reproduces their social status. This might consider Bourdieu's (1999) idea of the "profits of position", which suggests that the economic ability of tourists to undertake the journey to visit the precinct means that potentially they can derive symbolic status or capital. This notion indicates that cultural consumption might also be a socio-economic investment (Zukin, 1995 & 2012).

5.   REPRESENTATIONS AND POLITICS AT A HERITAGE TOURISM SITE

The second example is a heritage tourism site, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall. Again based on a CPE perspective, the analysis considers how the site's cultural and semiotic representations related to political concerns.   The Memorial Hall remembers the 1937 Nanjing Massacre during Japan's invasion of China and capture of the city, when the government claims that Japanese troops killed 300,000 Chinese. The terrible suffering of the city's residents during the Massacre is widely recognised in China, and the Memorial Hall attracts substantial numbers of domestic tourists.

The discussion here draws on CPE ideas to examine the reciprocal connections between representations in the cultural/semiotic and political spheres. It is argued that the Memorial Hall's interpretations of the 1937 Massacre were infused with selective representational frameworks for political meaning-making. These emphasized that the country's former national weaknesses, that allowed Japan to invade China, provide important historical lessons for the country today. Notable among the lessons are the need for national economic and political strength, and for national cohesion. An official site guidebook, for example, explains that the Massacre shows that "invasion and massacre are catastrophe for the victim nation. We shall never forget that weakness invites aggression that causes the whole nation to suffer; we shall never forget the historical lessons of invasion and people's sufferings" (Zhu, 2007, p.41).

As an official "red tourism" site, the interpretative messages in the Hall were likely to accord with official central state and Chinese Communist Party views. While visiting the Hall in 2004, the Chinese Communist Party General Secretary asserted that "Here is a good place to carry out the education of patriotism. Never forget to educate the adolescents on patriotism at any time" (Zhu, 2007, p.62). Several researchers assert that the nationalism promoted at such "red tourism" sites might be intended to help to legitimise the Chinese Communist Party's dominant political position in China's governance and society (Coble, 2007; Denton, 2005; He, 2007). The site's emphasis on the nation's strength, for example, might help to legitimise the Communist Party's political focus over recent decades on marketization and economic development.   According to Vaara, Tienari and Laurila (2006, p. 791), the

construction of senses of legitimacy can occur through "micro-level textual practices and strategies", and further work can explore in detail how this could occur for the Memorial Hall (Bratt, 2017).

The Memorial Hall's bold and imposing modern architecture and striking use of multi-media presentation techniques, for example, might be interpreted as affected by the state's broad political intentions. Its large new building opened in 2007 is shaped like the bow of a ship, representing "the Ship of Peace", and its profile looks like a broken sabre (Zhu, 2007). The interpretation includes numerous sculptures of the suffering of victims, historical reconstructions, photographs, videos, and a drip of water representing a person being killed every twelve seconds over the six weeks of the Massacre. One could look at the Memorial Hall's powerfully seductive architectural form and interpretative media as the state's attempt to re-create for tourists the searing emotional impact and the mythical dimensions of the 1937 Massacre, with the expectation that this could re-invigorate their associated political awareness (Benjamin, 2008; Rossi, 2017).

Tourists' responses to representations at the Memorial Hall are considered next in terms of whether the Memorial Hall's representational signs, symbols and messages were hegemonic. This is informed by CPE concerns to consider both structural and agency processes as well as both interdependencies and tensions in social relations.

The Memorial Hall's political messages about the need for national strength and cohesion were broadly accepted, or viewed positively, by many domestic tourists interviewed at the site. One described how "My boy asked me about...why unarmed Chinese people were killed by the Japanese. I suggested that he should forgive the Japanese...and Chinese people should become stronger, so that they cannot be invaded by other foreigners". Another of these tourists took away the message that "Backwardness leaves you vulnerable to being attacked. In the past, we had this miserable history of the Nanjing Massacre...We Chinese people should become stronger so that nobody can invade us any more". For some of these tourists there is evidence of tensions, as expressed in their alternative meaning-making and responses to the site's interpretation. One domestic tourist stated: "I know that some of Nanjing's tourism attractions are patriotic education places. However, the reason for visiting those places is their history and culture, and not for patriotic education". Others commented: "I do not like the patriotic education at some tourist sites. I feel it looks like a brainwashing activity", and "Patriotic education might have been useful fifty or sixty years ago, but not anymore. I do not think that it is very useful for the future either". Overall, this suggests that certain values of China's governing regime were presented in the Memorial Hall, but that, while many individuals largely accepted the messages and meanings, others could inflect, reinterpret and challenge them (Russo, 2016).

The Memorial Hall represents an example where political, cultural and semiotic processes, structural and agency relations, and interdependencies and tensions – as well as inter-connections between them – were involved in the co-constitution of urban heritage tourism practices, as would be suggested in CPE thinking. Future

analysis from this perspective of the state's political project of "red tourism" at this site, and others, probably needs to work even more at bringing together the top-down, structural political intentions with the evolving every-day, lived beliefs of the visiting tourists and government officials associated with these sites. Further acknowledgement may well be needed of "the proactive role that long-term rhythms of socio-cultural change can play in reshaping formal practices of politics, policy, and administration", even for China's dominant political regime (Barnett, 2005, p. 7). Such CPE-informed research could further highlight the importance of considering personal and social values, and emotions and feelings, alongside structural political processes.

6.   CONCLUSION

The CPE approach to urban heritage tourism developed in this paper responds to calls made by some researchers for tourism studies to integrate cultural and political economy perspectives (Bramwell & Lane, 2014). Thus, Bianchi (2009, p. 493) argues for more tourism research involving "a sustained analysis of the articulations between structural forces, discourse and agency". Wearing and Foley (2017, p. 100) also assert that more work is needed on tourist experiences in cities that "critically examines interrelations between the material and ideational and also between representations and structural processes embedded in contemporary capitalism". CPE potentially can provide a bridge between what may be seen as sometimes unhelpfully divided social science perspectives.

The CPE approach to interpreting heritage tourism in urban contexts adopted here was based on a relational view of the inter-connectedness embedded within societal relations, including the position that the cultural/semiotic and the economic/political are co-constitutive of those relations. While analysis of relationships involved in urban heritage tourism may begin with either the cultural/semiotic or economic/political dimensions, the task must take seriously a return to consider the other dimensions and their inter-connections. The CPE approach focused on bringing together the agency and structural processes involved in heritage tourism because they are inter-connected and co-evolve. The dynamic interplay between agency and structure is considered to take place in the context of society's multiple interdependencies and tensions. From this perspective, urban heritage tourism involves interwoven agency-structure and cultural/semiotic and economic/political relationships. The relationships discussed here were those around production and consumption, meanings and representations, power and governance, and commodification, including actors' reactions to them.

Future research on urban heritage tourism, and tourism more generally, could draw on ideas and interpretations offered by other researchers in order to extend the core ideas behind a CPE "framing". Inter-connected structure-agency relations, for example, could be assessed using Giddens' (1984) structuration notion, Archer's (1995) morphogenetic approach, or Long's (2001) emphasis on documenting from below every-day micro-situations as situated social practices.

Adopting a CPE perspective for research on urban heritage tourism may help the researcher to avoid the potential pitfalls of adopting excessively culturalist or economist research positions. It could steer research questions, methods and interpretations in this subject field so as to avoid determinism, such as through pure structural explanation. Similarly, it may discourage unhelpful reductionism, including through economism, idealism and voluntarism. This includes challenging such reductive dualisms as the assumption of the disempowered urban resident and the empowered urban tourist in heritage contexts, because power is seen as relational and multi-directional, and thus not exclusively located with the tourist (Wearing & Foley, 2017). A CPE approach may also discourage excessive relativism, such as from a denial of the potential for underlying causal explanations. It may also allow for some generalisation, while recognising the importance of specific context and local or larger-scale distinctiveness for both social actors and for critical analysis.   At the same time, it is necessary to recognise the difficulties of combining the sometimes very different theoretical and epistemological perspectives of cultural and political economy research, especially when these perspectives can "exist in parallel conceptual universes and are guarded jealously by warring tribes" (Harding & Blokland, 2014, p, 225).

The study's application of its CPE "framing" to two examples of Nanjing's heritage tourism indicated its relevance and value by providing new insights and suggesting further research questions.   Through this it offers ideas about how CPE might be used to evaluate urban heritage tourism in other case study situations.

In the case of Nanjing's Confucian temple heritage precinct, the CPE approach prompted assessment of how economic relations in the built environment were intertwined with tourist meaning-making and identities in the cultural/semiotic societal sphere. Attention was also directed to inter-connections between structural relations and human responses or agency, notably through differing experiences of the precinct. Here it was shown that the precinct's economic vitality was co-constituted through monopoly rents and tourists' reactions to the district's commercialization. Analysis of the case of the Memorial Hall for the 1937 Nanjing Massacre drew on CPE ideas to examine interconnections between the cultural/semiotic and political spheres. It was found that political meaning-making informed representations of the Massacre found in exhibits at this site.   Given CPE's emphasis on structure-agency relations and interdependencies and tensions, attention was also directed to critically assessing whether the Memorial Hall's representational messages were hegemonic through considering tourist responses. Here the approach and findings suggested future research questions, such as about the state's responsiveness in its "red tourism" messages to changing popular views and sensitivities.

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