



THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF CONTEMPORARY HERITAGE RESEARCH

Edited by Emma Waterton
and Steve Watson





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13

Industrial Heritage and Tourism: A Review of the Literature

Alfonso Vargas-Sánchez

Although industrial heritage tourism (or industrial tourism) is not a new phenomenon, it has acquired increasing importance as part of the cultural offering presented by a growing number of destinations. In fact, it can be a source of profitable differentiation for them, taking advantage of particular past and present industrial resources to generate potentially distinctive and memorable experiences. These resources are part of a destination's culture, a feature of what the particular locality was, is and, perhaps, will be. A number of successful cases around the globe demonstrate the benefits of exploiting this potential, and, where people are poorly informed about the industrial past and the processes involved, there is a great opportunity to arouse their curiosity and encourage them to visit such places.

Industrial heritage tourism broadly involves making visits to industrial centres (places of past or, indeed, current industry that has a past in that place) to extend the cultural experiences of tourists in learning about the economic activity of other peoples, past and present. This segment is closely related to a type of consumers (tourists) who seek new types of experiences or emotions, and have a particular interest in the technology on display and the social and economic history of the places being visited (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2007).

Industrial heritage tourism can be considered widely or narrowly, depending on the definition adopted, and visitor statistics are not always easy to obtain and are therefore difficult to compare and aggregate. The same applies to its economic impact in terms of overnight stays and money spent. More specifically, it can be understood as visits to industrial operations, to sites where productive activity is actually happening, to witness processes that are at work, in motion, in real time, as an experience that generates the special excitement of an authentic encounter. Alternatively, it can take the form of industrial archaeology, which is most often (though not always) founded on a long-dead and

subsequently re-created heritage (such as mining parks). This issue will be revisited in subsequent sections when the scope of industrial heritage, as manifest in this review of the literature, will be delimited.

Heritage is, for many destinations, a key element and a major factor in attracting tourists, and heritage-based tourism has been enthusiastically embraced all over the world as a way of creating idiosyncratic experiences for visitors. Within this framework, the chapter will focus on a particular kind of heritage, industrial heritage, which is viewed as having a substantial weight in the construction and maintenance of a national or local identity, as with other types of heritage (Palmer, 1999).

The close relationship shared between tourism and industrial heritage will be presented in order to demonstrate how researchers have addressed the connection between them, over time. This relationship has a complex nature, with a number of studies (Prideaux and Kininmont, 1999; Du Cros, 2001; Prideaux, 2002; Aas et al., 2005; McKercher et al., 2005) shifting the focus away from merely conserving heritage resources towards interpreting, presenting and actively exploiting them as tourist attractions (Cossons, 1989; Moscardo, 1996).

State of the art

Industrial tourism is being promoted with ever greater intensity in a number of destinations. It involves a broad spectrum of types, including industrial centres of activity (factories, workshops, industrial operations, etc.), still in operation or not, and it extends the cultural experience available to the tourist as a way of learning about the economic activity, technology and working conditions, past and present. Not surprisingly, therefore, due to the nature of tourism as an academic discipline (or 'indiscipline', as it has been described by Tribe, 1997 and 2000), industrial heritage tourism, as a segment of it, is not a homogeneous object of study. It has been fragmented by approaches from diverse academic and methodological standpoints, with research efforts focusing on particular aspects and manifestations.

In order to survey the current state of research in this field, and to construct a unique contribution to its development, various complementary searches were done on relevant academic journals, covering the articles published in a time span up to 2011. Where these articles are cited in the following text, they are included in the reference list. Two scientific databases were selected for this purpose. First was the *ISI Web of Knowledge* (Thomson Reuters), searching under the topics 'industrial heritage' and 'tourism'. This search produced 18 articles and was supplemented with additional items that came up after the following searches: 'mining heritage' and 'tourism' and 'industrial tourism'. Second, *Scopus* (Elsevier) was used in order to complement the previous list with articles not included in the *ISI Web of Knowledge*. The results were under the topics

'industrial archaeology' and 'tourism', and yielded five more articles. Other searches with no output are omitted.

Concerning the sources where articles on this specific field have been published (Table 13.1), the two highly ranked titles on tourism are at the top of the list, together with a specialized journal on heritage studies and another on geographical studies.

Unsurprisingly, English is the dominant language, as is usual in the academic community, but Spanish is still important, as observed in Table 13.2, where the language breakdown of the published articles is presented. Here, Spanish authors are more numerous, although the UK, aggregating England, Wales and Scotland, heads the list of countries to which the authors belong (Table 13.3). The massive process of deindustrialization suffered by both countries in recent decades has a clear connection with this fact; for example, the closing of mines, and their reconceptualization as potential tourist resources, has a very significant presence.

Two Spanish academics, Hernández-Ramírez and Ruiz-Ballesteros, have jointly authored two articles, the same number as Landorf (2009 and 2011) and Prentice (Prentice et al., 1998; McIntosh and Prentice, 1999), based in Australia and Scotland, respectively. These are the most prolific authors in the category.

The increase over time in the number of articles published is irregular, although it seems to show a growing trend. After the pioneering paper by Oglethorpe (1987), a long gap of eight years follows, but the output gained

Table 13.1 Source titles

	Total (%)
Tourism Management	5 (13.51)
Annals of Tourism Research	4 (10.81)
International Journal of Heritage Studies	4 (10.81)
Canadian Geographer	3 (8.11)
Others	21 (56.76)
Total	37 (100)

Table 13.2 Language

	Total (%)
English	28 (75.68)
Spanish	5 (13.51)
German	3 (8.11)
Catalan	1 (2.70)
Total	37 (100)

Table 13.3 Country of authors' affiliated institutions

	Total (%)
UK (England, Scotland and Wales)	10 (23.26)
Spain	9 (20.93)
Australia	6 (13.95)
Canada	5 (11.63)
US	3 (6.98)
Others	10 (23.26)
Total	43 (100)

Table 13.4 Year of publication

Year	Total
2006–2011	22
2001–2005	6
1996–2000	8
Before 2000	1
Total	37

momentum in the last few years, achieving its peak in 2011 (Table 13.4). The work of McIntosh and Prentice (1999) has gathered the highest number of citations, followed by Prentice et al. (1998), Edwards and Llundrés i Coit (1998), Caffyn and Lutz (1999) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2009). Three of them are devoted to mining heritage tourism.

Concerning the main research areas into which this set of articles can be categorized, the results obtained reflect the multidisciplinary character of this field of study and, at the same time, the inability to identify a single body of consolidated knowledge. This suggests, perhaps, that this field is still in a very early stage, with few and scattered research efforts in a kind of disciplinary guerrilla warfare. It could be argued that this reflects the general situation of tourism, as not being understood yet as a discipline in itself, but as an area of application for more established and consolidated disciplines such as geography, economics, business administration and so on. I would argue, however, that the situation is more acute in this particular segment: it has caught the attention of researchers later than the general field of tourism, even heritage tourism, and the literature is therefore still diverse and lacking in disciplinary coherence.

The situation described by Tribe (1997), in which tourism is conceptualized as being constituted of both business and the non-business aspects, is applicable in this case, but this would be simplistic. According to the findings in Table 13.5, it is true that the economics and business axis is present, but

Table 13.5 Main disciplinary areas

	Total (%)
Geography	13 (28.89)
Economics–business–management	9 (20.00)
Environmental and urban studies	9 (20.00)
Humanities	6 (13.33)
Sociology	4 (8.89)
Others	4 (8.89)
Total	45 (100)

Table 13.6 Focus of papers

	Total (%)
Generic on industrial heritage	16 (43.24)
Specific on mining tourism	13 (35.14)
Other specific segments	8 (21.62)*
Total	37 (100)

* Two of them on agricultural/rural heritage.

they are not predominant at this moment, the field being clearly dominated by geography. The situation is even more complex when other research areas and disciplines are added to the mix, such as environmental and urban studies, humanities and sociology.

Moving into the topics on which the articles are focused (Table 13.6), a specific niche appears with a very significant role: mining tourism. From different perspectives, this kind of industrial heritage has attracted a larger portion of the research interests and energies, in a number of countries with a strong mining tradition. For centuries, it has been a key industrial activity with a tremendous impact on the economic and social life of many communities, with mining not only a part of the landscape but also a shaper of identity and cultural characteristics.

Following this, it can be argued that a limitation of this survey, resulting from the search criteria used, is the absence of certain very popular industrial attractions that could be considered as part of the industrial tourism offer, for example those related to agricultural production such as wine-making and brewing, which are evident in many countries and have an increasing capacity for attracting visitors. Mining and wine tourism are likely the most popular manifestations of industrial tourism in the world, with heritage in the form of museums, parks and other facilities built around both. Nevertheless, wine tourism has not been specifically discussed here because of its particular cultural

nature (and connection with food and gastronomy, as a clear example), which would justify a more individual and specific focus and treatment (see Hall et al., 2002; Carlsen and Charters, 2006).

There can be no doubt that both the past and the present of some places are bound up with the industrial exploitation of their natural resources and the way this has developed their sense of place and place image. One of the most striking manifestations of this exploitation is mining activity. That legacy is still often a strong part of local culture, and tourism can be effective in representing this heritage, especially where it is marginalized, under threat and in progressive deterioration. In this sense, the importance given by researchers to this kind of industrial heritage is understandable and explains why research efforts have been mainly concentrated on what is generally known as ‘industrial archaeology’, that is, on tourism based on moribund industrial activity as a source of heritage. By contrast, very few articles have been devoted to tourism in operating industrial facilities, such as farms or distilleries.

Generally, these papers are supported by case studies and particular experiences located in well-determined locations: Table 13.7 summarizes the countries on which the research is focused. As illustrated, the UK and Spain are, by far, the most frequent places where this kind of research has been carried out. Canada and the US follow.

In terms of research methodologies, as displayed in Table 13.8, most of them have a qualitative nature, having used techniques such as a review of documents or content analysis, as well as various types of interviews and observations (see Chapter 1, this volume, for a fuller exploration of methods). This corresponds with an early stage of research development in this field, and the predominant disciplines for most of the studies that have been carried out; there is undoubtedly a descriptive and exploratory character.

Table 13.7 Countries where research has been carried out

	Total (%)
UK (England, Scotland and Wales)	12 (30.00)
Spain	10 (25.00)
Canada	4 (10.00)
US	3 (7.50)
Europe	3 (7.50)
Australia	2 (5.00)
Germany	1 (2.50)
Hong Kong	1 (2.50)
Italy	1 (2.50)
Japan	1 (2.50)
New Zealand	1 (2.50)
Sweden	1 (2.50)
Total	40 (100)

Table 13.8 Methodological approaches

	Total (%)
Quantitative*	6 (16.22)
Qualitative	25 (67.57)
Mix**	3 (8.11)
Theoretical paper	3 (8.11)
Total	37 (100)

* Surveys of visitors (3), residents (1), museums (1); another is based on pictures.

** The quantitative side is based on surveys of residents (2) and both visitors and residents (1).

Analysis of the literature survey

As a result of the number of articles published, the first conclusion seems quite obvious: this is clearly an under-researched field, with great potential for growth.

Traditionally, the UK and Spain have been the countries in which this field of study has attracted interest. Most of the authors work for higher education institutions in these countries, and most of the places on which the articles are focused (mostly related to closed mines) are also located in both countries. Moreover, while this is a very young field of study, with quite a limited number of papers published in journals, there has been a discernible increase, with a peak in the last couple of years. Additionally, the relatively low number of citations might lead to the conclusion that this narrow academic community needs to be strengthened, especially in terms of interactions among its members.

The diversity of disciplines or research areas informing the studies in this field (geography, economics, environmental studies, etc.) is another relevant feature to be emphasized, which represents an enormous challenge in terms of scholarly interaction while providing, at the same time, an additional source of interest in terms of theory development. The researchers' ability to integrate this variety of perspectives will be essential for a much richer understanding of the complexities of the interaction between industrial heritage and tourism.

Following this trend, factories and industrial facilities that are still in operation also have the potential to receive visitors regularly and, therefore, to become tourist attractions. This operational context provides another fruitful future research direction. This is a more recent dimension of industrial heritage tourism, with different implications for the diverse perspectives of the phenomenon: visitors' motivations and expectations, visitors' safety, potential costs and benefits, social impacts, complementarity with other resources in particular destinations and so forth. The additional complexities in this context suggest different dimensions of study, not least the relationship, or tension,

between the gaze of the tourist and the experience of those working; further study is surely required, a challenge that academics are called to address much more extensively. In short, more research in the field of operating industrial tourism, in the sense of experiential tourism based on visiting companies carrying out industrial processes, both soft and hard, is clearly needed. This new aspect, within the area of cultural tourism, would complement the traditional research focus on long-dead industrial heritage (such as mines) and its re-creation for tourism, as has been shown in the previous section of this chapter.

With regard to the methodologies of research, without glossing over qualitative approaches in particular cases, a more balanced position would be desirable in an attempt to generalize conclusions with greater confidence. An increase in the application of quantitative methods could, therefore, be encouraged to some advantage for this emerging field. This would imply, at the same time, a step forward, moving from descriptive research efforts into explanatory (and even predictive) ones. Inductive efforts should be followed by deductive ones: proposing hypotheses, creating theoretical frameworks and testing them in real situations. These research paths (induction–deduction; description–explanation) could help to consolidate this corpus of knowledge in its currently emergent state.

The analysis of the authors' keywords in the set of articles identified leads us to additional conclusions and proposals. A myriad of aspects related to tourism management have already been considered (consumption, impacts and so forth), but much more emphasis is needed on them and others. For instance, key theoretical constructs such as 'authenticity' and 'experiences' have been studied very rarely in the context of industrial heritage, as have stakeholder collaboration and partnerships. Furthermore, although issues related to sustainability (sustainable development, sustainable tourism) have already been researched, this topic is by no means exhausted; on the contrary, it is not hard to assume that it will gain further momentum in the years to come (see Chapter 30, this volume, for a fuller discussion of sustainable development). Other topics poorly researched until now, but with potential for guiding future research efforts, are the conservation of industrial heritage versus its selective reinvention for tourism (see Dicks, 2000); the role of industrial heritage in the identity of local communities and residents' perceptions; and industrial landscapes in their different dimensions (natural, sociocultural, etc.).

Future directions

On the basis of the review provided above, I now offer the following perspective on what this canon of literature has achieved, how it is developing and how I see it going forward. Industrial heritage tourism, as a form of cultural tourism, is of interest not simply because of its potential for future growth, but

also because it diversifies the range of what constitutes heritage and provides opportunities for heritage tourism that are more immediately reflective of the culture and characteristics of host communities. At sites that are operational, it provides a direct link with the economic culture of the location, whereas even in historic sites it represents work and working conditions that are often within living memory and which materialize the most characteristic aspects of a community's image, history and culture.

From a life-cycle point of view, this niche of tourism is still in its infancy, and its potential for growth seems obvious because of the increasing interest in this topic and because it is now an accepted part of what constitutes cultural and heritage tourism. The reasons for this are diverse: cultural tourism is now widely considered to be well established and one of the more economically promising market segments in contemporary tourism and destination management, regardless of whether the destination is located in an urban or a rural context. There is also a sense in which this kind of tourism represents a shift from simple sight-seeing tourism to something more experiential and immersive, based on a more active engagement with the daily life or recent history of the destination.

While industrial heritage tourism (or industrial tourism) is gaining momentum in the developed world (where former industrial facilities are being reused, and therefore preserved, for leisure and tourism purposes), its presence is now also apparent in the developing world. In Taiwan, for example, the Ministry of Economic Affairs has announced that tourist visits to factories should rise to 11.5 million in 2013, from about 10 million in 2012 (*The China Post*, 30 June 2013, p. 11). According to this report, this niche of the tourism sector has been actively promoted in that country in order to provide a new source of income to manufacturers of traditional products (cakes, pastries or rice, as examples) that have been losing their competitive edge, largely due to higher labour costs.

With regard to Asia more generally, the *Taipei Declaration for Asian Industrial Heritage*, launched in 2012 by the International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage (TICCIH, 2012), has made a very clear attempt to produce a broad definition of industrial heritage that accommodates the differences between the development of industry in the West and in Asia, and which focuses on the contribution it makes to local identity as an expression of the close involvement of local people:

We recognize that industrial heritage in Asia, witnessing the process of the modernization, contributes to the identity of regions and countries, and forms an integral part of the history. Furthermore, the achievement of industrialization in Asia is always achieved with the help of hard-working local people. Industrial heritage is closely associated with the life history, memories, and stories of local people and social changes.

(TICCIH, 2012, p. 5)

The closeness of local communities to this kind of heritage puts an emphasis on its more experiential dimension from a tourism perspective. The challenge, then, for both researchers and practitioners, is to understand the nature of this experience, not just in terms of the marketing aspects but as a genuine encounter and an engagement with the experiences of others, to which visitors might wish to relate their own experience of work and of earning a living. This labour history dimension is matched by the need to understand, 'design' and evaluate the quality of the experience offered, and how to raise standards of visitor experience and management. The role of the new technologies (especially information and communications technologies) can be easily anticipated to be critical in this sense, offering another promising avenue for future research and development efforts in this field.

An area with significant potential growth within industrial tourism, especially where there is a clear heritage connection, is concerned with visits to factories that are still operational. The 'Kojo Moe' movement in Japan is at the extreme of this idea of factory tourism, where large-scale industrial plants become the object of tourist interest, usually as visits to factories that recognize tourism as a valuable source of additional revenue, again where heritage or the long-established nature of the operation and its links with the locality are recognized.

Although industrial tourism (understood as a visit to an operational plant) is not a new phenomenon within the tourism sector, it is acquiring increasing importance as part of the cultural heritage offer presented by many tourist destinations. As Otgaar et al. (2010) state, the first requirement is the creation of an alliance between industries with a potential for receiving visitors and tourist agents, bearing in mind that in some places manufacturing activities and tourism are still seen as incompatible activities. Finding ways to make them mutually compatible is, therefore, the challenge, although the potential economic benefits are clear. The first issue is to understand that an industrial centre, such as a factory, processing plant or a farm, is often closely connected with people's perception of their local past, their memories and their sense of community. The second issue is that such places may find a wider audience and, as an integral part of the locality, may become part of the tourism economy. The difficulty here is in understanding the dynamics behind the transformation of such places and spaces from being exclusively associated with production to being concerned also with consumption, in a leisure and service-based context.

This phenomenon stimulates some basic questions. Why are more and more companies opening their minds (and doors) to industrial tourism and promoting visits to their installations? To what kinds of visitor are they catering? Why and how would these visits be attractive to different target groups? What explains the increasing interest in this kind of experience in factories and similar facilities? From an economic point of view, one obvious answer is because

companies derive certain benefits from this policy, in spite of the inevitable extra costs and investments for the adaptations required; a factory may be a destination resource, but it is not yet a product, and has to be part of a comprehensive offer in the destination, diverse and consistent at the same time.

Depending on the nature of the economic activity carried out and the visitor group targeted, there may be financial benefits in the short term (extra income as a consequence of tickets issued and products sold during the visits) or in the medium to long term (enhanced reputation, public relations, closer ties with external stakeholders, etc.). However, sometimes a more powerful motivation can be found in the pressures faced by companies to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility and links with local communities and the past in those communities. For large firms, in particular, this institutional pressure is seen as fundamental. I would suggest, therefore, the application of the institutional theory framework for a better understanding of this phenomenon, as a future research direction.

Concerning the motivation and approach of the companies' allies or partners, primarily public authorities, a long-term view is essential, as demonstrated by Otgaar et al. (2010). The public authorities must support companies in this venture, and incorporate company visits as part of a model of sustainable tourism. In particular, industrial tourism can become part of packages that are effective in encouraging more people to come, and to make more overnight stays. This should ultimately contribute to local development and community satisfaction on the part of residents.

It is also relevant to distinguish between big and small/medium-sized companies. In the latter case, due to their fewer resources, it seems evident that they need extra assistance to initiate and develop this process, together with more comprehensive organizational capacities, to ensure the required standards of quality of service to match visitors' expectations. Industrial tourism can be a source of profitable differentiation for a tourism destination, taking advantage of its particular industrial resources and industrial heritage to generate potentially distinctive and memorable experiences. These resources are part of its culture, a feature of what the particular locality was, is and, perhaps, will be. A number of successful cases around the globe demonstrate that there are no *prima facie* reasons for not exploiting this potential, especially when more and more people are poorly informed about these industrial processes and how they have made our lives more comfortable. In other words, there is a great opportunity to arouse people's curiosity, and curiosity mobilizes people to visit places.

However, once again, successful industrial heritage tourism needs to be carefully planned and agreed among the various agents (private and public) with critical roles to play. The stakeholder theory approach is also necessary when dealing with these projects. It would seem reasonable to expect, then, that the

spread of this type of heritage, both in itself and in connection with tourism in various parts of the world (including the developing world), will have consequences for the canon of research and literature that is developing around it and which has been surveyed here. Case studies, for example, might be expected from a broader span of countries and reflecting a broader range of labour histories and experiences. It is now time, therefore, for researchers to take the lead in shedding new light on industrial heritage, not only in terms of its variety and typologies, but also to produce new insights into its meaning and interpretation as engagement and experience. This implies the need for a balanced and appropriate set of methodologies, which relates to the issue of multidisciplinary, which is also relevant to this field and is necessary for consolidating this field of study, especially since its knowledge base is so broad, in economics, technology, sociology, geography, anthropology and labour history, and when the experiences it offers are potentially so diverse and globally relevant. Until now these perspectives have usually worked in isolation, but this diversity must be addressed in a creative and critical way in order to create real understandings of the field and its complex dynamics.

Bibliographical Appendix

In order to do justice to the very broad range of literature that can be subsumed within the category of industrial heritage tourism, the following extended bibliography is included. It cannot hope to be encyclopaedic and, of course, the passage of time will erode its currency, but it will at least provide the reader with a range of literature to complement the works cited above and demonstrate the multidisciplinary breadth of this topic.

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