Chapter 13

New Cultural Mediators, Cocreation, and the Cultural Consumption of Creative Tourism Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Creative tourism has been a proficuous ground for the implementation of ICT’s (Information and Communications Technology) strategies and the so-called creative industries. New cultural mediators are changing tourism consumption. Postmodern consumers have brought new perceptions to cocreation processes through user-generated content, eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth), peer-to-peer exchange, collaborative economy, SoLoMo (social-local-mobile) tourists, among others. Booktubers and music fans/consumers in Chile constitute examples of diverse consumption through virtual and physical mediation, as capital construction enables social practices. In this exploratory study, the authors discuss how creative experiences are being consumed through cultural mediation made possible by technological developments. The creative tourism network website is analysed in the light of postmodern cultural mediation and capital construction.

INTRODUCTION

Creative tourism can be understood as a postmodern type of tourism (Molina, 2016) where tourists engage with locals directly and are given the chance to develop their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986, 2010). ICT’s and new technologies play an important role where new consumers act as cultural mediators influencing cultural and tourism consumption. New cultural mediators (Arriagada & Cruz, 2014; Jeffman, 2014), present themselves as being part of a specialized group of consumers which proactively influence consumption choices in several fields. In this exploratory study, two examples are analyzed in order to connect new approaches to cultural mediation in the sociology of culture and tourism. Booktubers and music consumer fans represent two important examples where cultural mediation exceeds virtual purposes. New ways of cultural capital creation are present as the establishment of new virtual and physical networks crucial for tourism and culture fruition, boosts social phenomena. The aim of this chapter is to discuss how creative tourism experiences are being consumed by a new cultural mediation made possible by technological developments. The creative tourism network website is analyzed (http://www.creativetourismnetwork.org) using content analysis (Carvalho, Costa, & Ferreira, 2015; Ratz, 2016). This exploratory research seeks to perceive how cultural mediation occurs in relation to this special niche tourism (Richards, 2016), how the website allows for social engagement and how creative destinations are been promoted in terms of cultural mediation processes. The chapter is organized in several sections. The Background is divided in three theoretical areas in which the paper is based. In the next section the main focus of the chapter treats in detail the creative tourism network website, followed by future research directions and conclusions sections.

BACKGROUND

Specialised Cultural Consumption in Postmodern Tourism

*I am someone who can adapt to any cultural way-of-life, any fashion style, or any cultural good as I flexibly accumulate a broad range of diverse experiences.* (Thompson, 2000, p. 130)

The statement above made by Thompson (2000), illustrates the versatile character of postmodern consumers where cultural fruition, mediation and symbolic capital are present. Postmodernism consists of the dissolution of borders, not only between high and low culture, but also between different cultural forms, such as tourism, art, education, photography, television, music, sports, shopping and architecture (Urry, 2002). “Architecture, the representational arts, and all branches of the humanities and the social fields have been energized (…) by the turn to things postmodern” (Thompson, 2000, p. 118). In short, the mass communication era has transformed the tourist gaze and many of the features of “postmodernity” have already prefigured in part on existing tourism practices (Urry, 2002). This also influences tourism outcomes as the new tourist is motivated by higher-level motivations, driven by post-materialistic values and consciously seeks the experiences important for him (McLeod, 2006).

The concept and its meaning has been discussed in different ways, for example for Giddens, (2002) the word “post-modernity” is often used as a synonym for “postmodernism” or post-industrial society”. For the author, postmodernism is appropriated to refer to styles or movements in literature, painting and