Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas
A review of the literature

Edited by Greg Richards

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial intelligence
AR	Augmented reality
CCI	Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)
CCS	Cultural and Creative Sectors
CCT	Cultural and creative tourism
MR	Mixed reality
OR	Outermost regions
RRA	Rural and Remote Areas
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
VR	Virtual reality
WHS	World Heritage Site
WOS	Web of Science

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CROCUS PROJECT

The Project "Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas: Sustainable Business Models, Cooperation, and Policies," aims to address socio-economic challenges faced by rural and remote areas (RRA) through the promotion of cultural and creative tourism (CCT).

The CROCUS Project has been funded under the Horizon Europe programme. The aims of the CROCUS Project are to:

(a) Generate knowledge about which Cultural and Creative Tourism (CCT) business models are most appropriate for different types of heritage and rural and remote areas (RRA);

(b) Develop cross-border living labs in which sustainable CCT business models will be prototyped

(c) develop macro-regional and cross-border policy scenarios for each of the four EU macro-regions (Baltic Sea, Adriatic and Ionian, Alpine, and Danube);

(d) synthesise knowledge and experience from the project to create tools and resources that RRA across Europe and beyond can use to develop sustainable and inclusive CCT in the future.

The work of the project, and therefore the focus of this review, centres on the four current EU macro-regions. Macro-regional strategies aim to promote cohesion and place-based development, to support local and regional initiatives that could benefit from macro-regional cooperation. This approach aims to bridge European political priorities and local needs, promoting participatory and bottom-up approaches to support entrepreneurship, transnational clusters and digital innovation hubs and gender equality. In line with these priorities, themes which require particular attention in the current review include sustainable tourism development in RRA, placemaking and cross-border cooperation.

This review has been undertaken by members of the CROCUS team, with a structured literature search strategy that covers both international databases such as Web of Science (WOS), Scopus and Google Scholar, as well as national databases in the CROCUS Partner countries. The aim of the review and related work is to:

- Provide an interdisciplinary literature review that synthesises existing knowledge about CCT, sustainable tourism development in RRA, placemaking and cross-border cooperation.
- Explore and analyse the benefits, needs and challenges of CCT in RRA.
- Identify current CCT business models, market trends and policy frameworks in the EU.
- Develop the overall conceptual and methodological framework of the project.

This literature review provides a basis for the identification of previous academic work relating to CCT in RRA in Europe, and to identify gaps in the literature to guide the work of the CROCUS Project. The literature review will also provide the theoretical basis on which subsequent stages of the project will be based.

2   METHODOLOGY

A number of separate steps were involved in the analysis of the literature and the development of the theoretical framework for the project.

The overall strategy was to cover as much of the existing literature as possible on a European scale. To achieve this, we first undertook a systematic literature review of cultural and creative tourism in RRA. This was also used to identify previous literature reviews on these subjects, which were analysed in terms of subject coverage and research gaps. The project partners also undertook a review of sources in their own countries and languages to enrich the mainly English language sources contained in databases such as WOS and Scopus (Richards et al., 2022). A summary of these sources was then produced in English to share with the project partners. The results of the systematic review in English and the reviews in different languages were then combined to produce an overall picture of previous work on CCT in RRA in Europe. Particular attention was paid to the gaps in the literature, as well as differences between countries and regions.

2.1   Literature review

The literature review was developed using the PRISMA (preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses) principles (Moher et al., 2015), as widely used in previous literature reviews, including those on rural and cultural and creative tourism (Joshi et al., 2024; Islam & Sadhukhan, 2024). The PRISMA method provides a means of ensuring a rigorous, transparent and replicable analysis of the literature.

Search strategy

The main literature search was conducted in April 2024 in the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases. The inclusion criteria for the search were as follows: 1) research must be conducted in Europe; 2) the research should be conducted in a rural/remote area and 3) conducted between 1989 (the first identified study of rural cultural tourism) and April 2024. Review articles, conference papers and sources not dealing with cultural and/or creative tourism in rural and/or remote areas were excluded.

The sources available in SCOPUS and WOS are predominantly English language sources, which tend to exclude potentially relevant sources from non-English speaking countries, as demonstrated by Richards et al. (2022) in the field of events. An additional search was therefore made in the Google Scholar database, which has a more extensive coverage of different languages. Members of the research team also conducted searches in relevant national databases where they had the linguistic skills to do so. This generated coverage of additional sources from Denmark, Finland, Croatia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain and Portugal, which also helped to broaden the coverage of the review.

The search terms used were "remote region" or "remote area" or "rural area" or "rural region" and "cultural tourism" or "creative tourism". For the partner searches these terms were also translated into the relevant language by the national project leaders.

The search results were then imported into Excel for further analysis. This was particularly useful for identifying duplicate entries. The sources were then reviewed for relevance. An initial scan was made of the abstracts and keywords to identify sources that did not meet the inclusion criteria of covering cultural or creative tourism in rural or remote areas in Europe. These sources were then also checked to see if they met any of the exclusion criteria, namely covering urban areas or large cities, not covering tourism, being outside Europe, or primarily dealing with agritourism and other areas not directly linked with culture.

A scan of the full text of the remaining documents was then made to ensure that the sources were fully relevant for our analysis. Once the relevant sources were confirmed using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the full text was reviewed to identify the main themes covered. From the qualifying sources, a total of 316 full text documents were recovered. In addition, the 467 relevant sources identified by the project partners were also analysed.

Figure 2.1 Literature search strategy and sources

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┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│     Scopus       │              │       WOS        │
│     N=394        │              │     N=386        │
└──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
           │                                 │
           ▼                                 ▼
             ┌──────────────────────┐
             │  Combined sources    │
             │      N=784           │
             └──────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
             ┌──────────────────────┐
             │ Excluded on initial  │
             │  scan  N=351         │
             └──────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
             ┌──────────────────────┐
             │ Qualifying full text │
             │   documents  N=316   │
             └──────────────────────┘
                        │
┌──────────────────┐    ▼
│    Additional    │  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ documents from   │─▶│ Total documents      │
│ project partners │  │  analysed  N=783     │
│     N=467        │  └──────────────────────┘
└──────────────────┘
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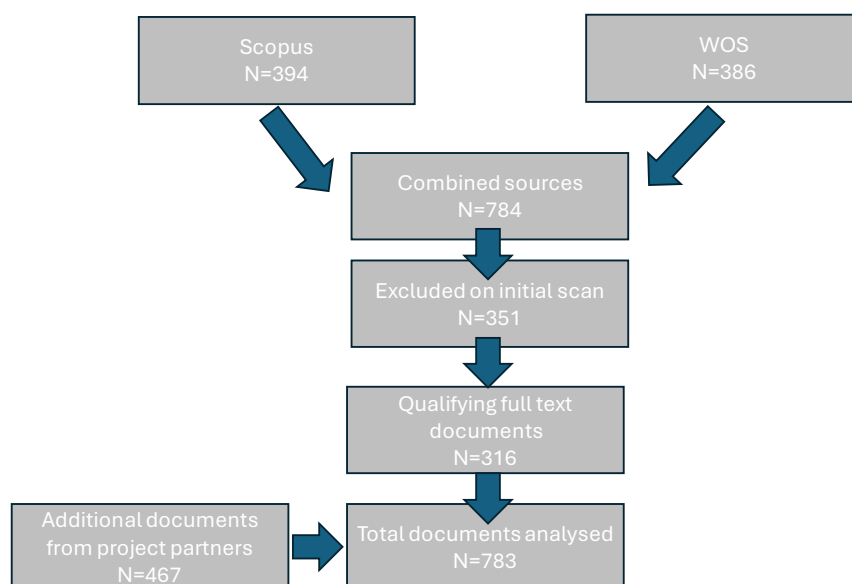
2.2   *Meta-review of previous literature reviews*

As a first step in the identification of relevant themes and research gaps in the literature, a meta-review of previous literature reviews was undertaken. Following the general review of cultural tourism by Richards (2018), there was a flurry of reviews on cultural tourism, most dealing with specific issues and niches in cultural or creative tourism. Our meta-review included a total of 13 literature reviews relating to cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas, covering a total of 1496 sources (although with large variations in coverage ranging between 19 and 960 sources). The reviews date between 2018 and 2024, mirroring the recent growth in the production of literature reviews generally. There were more reviews covering cultural tourism (8) than creative tourism (5), reflecting the relatively recent development of the latter field. The predominance of cultural tourism research was also reflected in the English language literature review and the reviews in other languages.

On inspection, eight of the literature reviews were directly relevant to our research questions in covering rural cultural or creative tourism. Others were not used for the full text analysis mainly for an urban emphasis or in one case not being in English. The full text of the eight remaining reviews was read to develop an overview of the main issues (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Literature reviews relating to CCT in RRA

Source	Title	Method	Findings	Research gaps
Richards (2018)	Cultural Tourism: A review of recent research and trends.	Narrative review. N= 120	Themes: cultural tourism as a form of cultural consumption, motivations for cultural tourism, the economic aspects of cultural tourism, the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage, the growth of the creative economy, and the links between anthropology and cultural tourism.	Gaps: relationship between tourists and residents, the meaning of 'local' culture, production of new tourist spaces, cultural tourism as a collection of cultural practices, synergies between tourism and culture, governance regimes, new technologies, mobilities, role of language in cultural tourism research.
Álvarez-García, Maldonado-Erazo, Del Río-Rama & Sánchez-Fernández, (2019)	Creative tourism in small cities and rural areas: A bibliographic review	Scopus and WOS - cities with 100,000 - 400,000 inhabitants. N=33	Very few sources in Europe. Three main areas of research: (1) creative exploitation of cultural and gastronomic heritage to support the creative industries; (2) revitalization of places through use of cultural capital and creative industries, strengthening the economy; (3) creative destruction of rural spaces by commercialization and overuse, reducing community support.	Gaps: Lack of research in Europe
Galvagno & Giaccone (2019)	Mapping Creative tourism research: reviewing the Field and outlining Future directions	Bibliometric analysis N=19	*three main research topics* Tourist Experience and Co-Creation Creativity in Tourism Cultural Tourism and Events *Research trends* Creativity and cultural tourism Creativity and local development Creativity and urban tourism Creative tourist experience Co-creation of tourist experience	No gaps identified.
Lonardi (2022)	Minority languages and tourism: a literature review	systematic literature analysis, N=52	Main themes: promotion of language to tourists, and the effects in terms of sustainability, authenticity and language endangerment.	No gaps identified
Ortega, Montero & Sánchez (2023)	The conceptual bibliometric analysis applied to the tourism -culture binomial 1995 -2020	Bibliometric mapping of "sustainable tourism and cultural tourism" in WOS. N=287	Themes - Fragmentation into niches, importance of sustainability, the relations of association between tourism and culture are confirmed. Most publications are from the United States, Australia, England, Spain, and China's People's Republic. Tourism supports tangible and intangible heritage recovery and economic	Research on cultural tourism in Europe

			development, helping combat depopulation.	
Palermo, Chieffallo & Virgilio (2023)	The Identification of Cultural Tourism Geographies	Systematic literature review of articles 2003-2023 with "tourism" and "cultural heritage" in Scopus. N=960	Themes: Tourism promotion, Sustainability and conservation, Geotourism and rural areas, Management and marketing. Rural tourism combats depopulation, provides alternatives to coastal tourism, maintains the landscape, avoids the marginalization of local communities.	Gaps - Widening the selected literature would enable the definition of more general clusters. "Roots Tourism" by migrants which contributes to diversifying and seasonally adjusting the local tourist offer. Participation of communities in cultural tourism
Islam & Sadhukhan (2024).	Progress in creative tourism research: a review for the period 2002–2023	Mixed method approach with bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review covering Scopus and WOS. N=75	Identifies a range of factors driving demand for creative tourism, including hard and soft factors. Transferability and copying of business models: "the destination must patent or copyright their uniqueness so others will not take them".	Gaps - identifying potential creative tourists, measuring performance, relationship of creative tourism and creative industries, spatial distribution of CT, reliability of creative experience scale, sociocultural drivers of creative tourism, relationship of satisfaction and revisit intention and governance structures.
Seočanac, M., Đorđević, N., & Pantović, D. (2024).	Cultural tourism in rural areas: Mapping research trends through bibliometric and content analysis.	WOS search ("cultural tourism" OR "heritage tourism" OR "cultural heritage") AND TS=(rural)N= 150	• Cultural tourism as a catalyst for rural development • Impacts and challenges of rural heritage tourism • Factors influencing rural destination image • Cultural tourism for sustainable rural development • Improving tourism experiences in cultural rural destinations • Empowerment in rural areas through cultural tourism	Gaps – need to include important theoretical perspectives: Stakeholder theory, Social exchange theory, Consumer culture theory and Transformative learning theory

Taken together, these literature reviews reveal several general research gaps, including a relative lack of cultural tourism research in Europe, a lack of theoretical grounding for creative tourism development, creative tourism demand and satisfaction, impact measurement, governance, new technologies and links between the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and tourism. In addition to this several niches or specific business models were identified, including language tourism and 'roots tourism'.

There have been a number of recent literature reviews on creative tourism, such as Álvarez-García, Maldonado-Erazo, Del Río-Rama, and Sánchez-Fernández (2019), which specifically deals with creative tourism in small cities and rural areas, and a review by Islam & Sadhukhan (2024) although this

concentrates more on urban areas. Cultural and creative tourism are usually approached separately in existing reviews, in spite of the overlaps and synergies between these two forms of tourism (Richards, 2021c).

There is increasing review activity in the field of RRA and CCT, as the field becomes more specialised. Most relevant studies date from the period 2018-2023, reflecting the overall growth in the tourism literature. A European focus is still missing, because much work is outside Europe (particularly in Asia). There is currently more focus on culture rather than creativity, and research on impacts also seems to be scarce.

A recent spate of EU research projects (e.g. CREATOUR, ImpactTour, TExTOUR) has focussed more attention on CCT in RRA and on sustainability issues (Peñalosa & Castaldi, 2024). For example, Álvarez-García et al. (2019) reviewed cultural and creative tourism specifically in rural and remote areas for the CREATOUR project. They outline some of the challenges of such areas, including low population density and tourist flows, and the relative lack of resources, producing a double challenge of providing a sufficient supply of resources to attract visitors and attracting enough visitors to support supply.

In terms of cultural tourism, Richards (2018) points to gaps in terms of the effects of cultural tourism on sustainability, the relationship between tourists and residents, the meaning of 'local' culture, the production of new tourist spaces, cultural tourism as a collection of cultural practices, synergies between tourism and culture, governance regimes, new technologies, mobilities, and the role of language in cultural tourism research. Bertacchini and Dalle Nogare (2021) identify gaps in the field of cultural tourism economics, including the definition of "cultural tourist" and the need for a deeper understanding of cultural tourists' motivations, attitudes, and behaviour. They suggest that the use of big data could be useful in tracing the economic impacts of cultural tourism, and that intangible culture should also receive more attention. From an economic perspective they also highlight the need for more research on wellbeing issues, governance, political economy and public choice, and issues of spatial interdependence related to strategic interaction between neighbouring local governments and destination management organisations (DMOs). Recent work by Ortega et al. (2023) indicates that there is now more cross-cutting work on sustainability. However, they point to persisting gaps in terms of community participation and the measurement of different dimensions of impacts (social, cultural, environmental).

Many other identified gaps relate to specific tourism niches. For example, Cardoso et al. (2018) identify "Roots Tourism" generated by migrants holidaying in their country of origin and Lonardi (2022) highlights a lack of research on authenticity and language endangerment in rural areas. Gaps were also found in terms of community participation and inclusive design in cultural tourism.

Other more general reviews relevant to the current study include work on innovation in hospitality and tourism (Gomezelj, 2016), a bibliometric study of the creative class in rural areas (Rodrigues et al., 2024) and the development of rural tourism experiences through networking (Tolstad, 2014), although no specific research gaps were identified by these reviews.

Uysal and Wang (2025) undertook a literature review on cultural tourism between 1985-2023. They identified a shift in the main keywords. Between 1985 and 2014, 'heritage', 'development', 'motivations', 'identity', 'impact', 'marketing' and 'industry' were predominant, whereas from 2015 to 2017, 'cultural tourism', 'sustainable development', 'indigenous tourism', 'innovation', 'quality of life' and 'museums' were more frequent. Since 2018, 'creative tourism', 'co-creation', 'visitor experience', 'intangible cultural heritage', 'Covid-19', 'residents', and 'well-being' have emerged as important keywords. Uysal and Wang note that there is still little empirical evidence of the link between the well-being of cultural tourists and residents. This seems to reflect a general shift in the cultural tourism literature with concerns for the tourism industry and the efficient management of tourism towards a broader approach which incorporates the needs of other stakeholders, most notably local residents, and the use of creativity as a means of linking places, local communities and visitors.

In general, this 'review of reviews' underlines some key gaps in the existing literature on CCT, in particular relating to issues of concern for RRAs. Much of the CCT literature has focussed on urban areas, where the integration of culture, creativity and tourism has been a powerful force in urban regeneration and re-positioning strategies (Richards & Wilson, 2007). There is some evidence of increased attention being paid to issues of sustainability in CCT in RRA, but this still tends to concentrate on environmental or economic issues rather than cultural or social ones. Of particular importance in relation to the CROCUS Project is the fact that creative tourism has to date attracted far less research attention than cultural tourism.

3   ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE ON CCT IN RRA

The analysis of the literature gathered from SCOPUS and WOS proceeded through different stages, including the identification of popular keywords, the analysis of abstracts and content analysis of the full texts. This section first presents an overall analysis of the sources in the CROCUS database, and then proceeds to provide a thematic analysis of these sources. The thematic analysis is organised into a number of major themes, including trends in cultural and creative tourism, CCT geographies, Resourcing CCT in RRAs, governance and future trends.

3.1   Analysis of the CROCUS database

The distribution of keywords follows the search strategy fairly closely, with 'tourism' and 'cultural' being the most frequent terms in both English and other languages. 'Rural' and 'development' were more common in other languages, while 'heritage' was more common in English. In English there was a clear preference for the use of 'cultural' above 'culture'.

Figure 3.1: Keywords SCOPUS v partner literature search
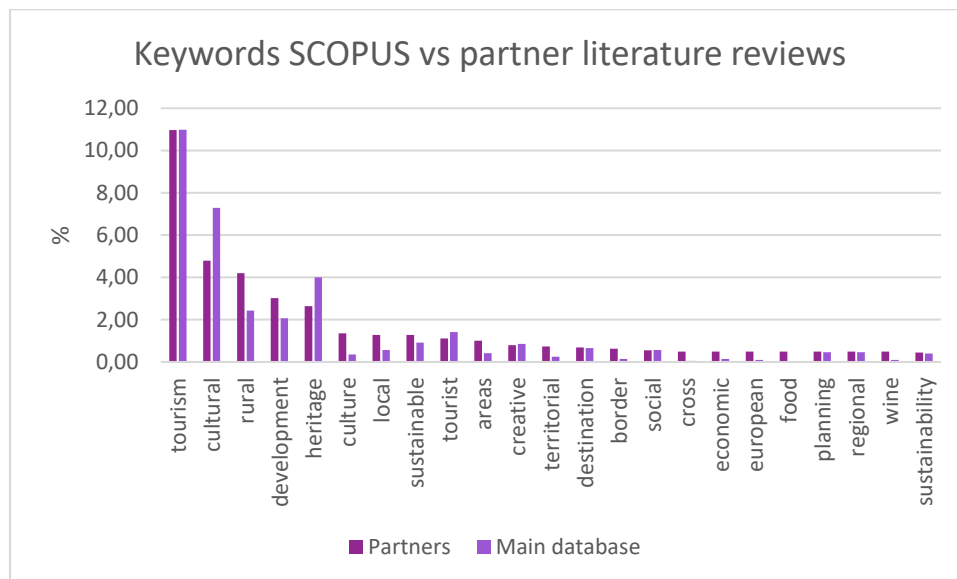
In the full text analysis of English language sources, 'tourism' was by far the most frequent term. This was followed by 'cultural', 'rural' and 'local'. The latter, as Russo and Richards (2016) observe, is increasingly seen as a marker for authenticity.

Figure 3.2: Top 20 words in the full text analysis by frequency
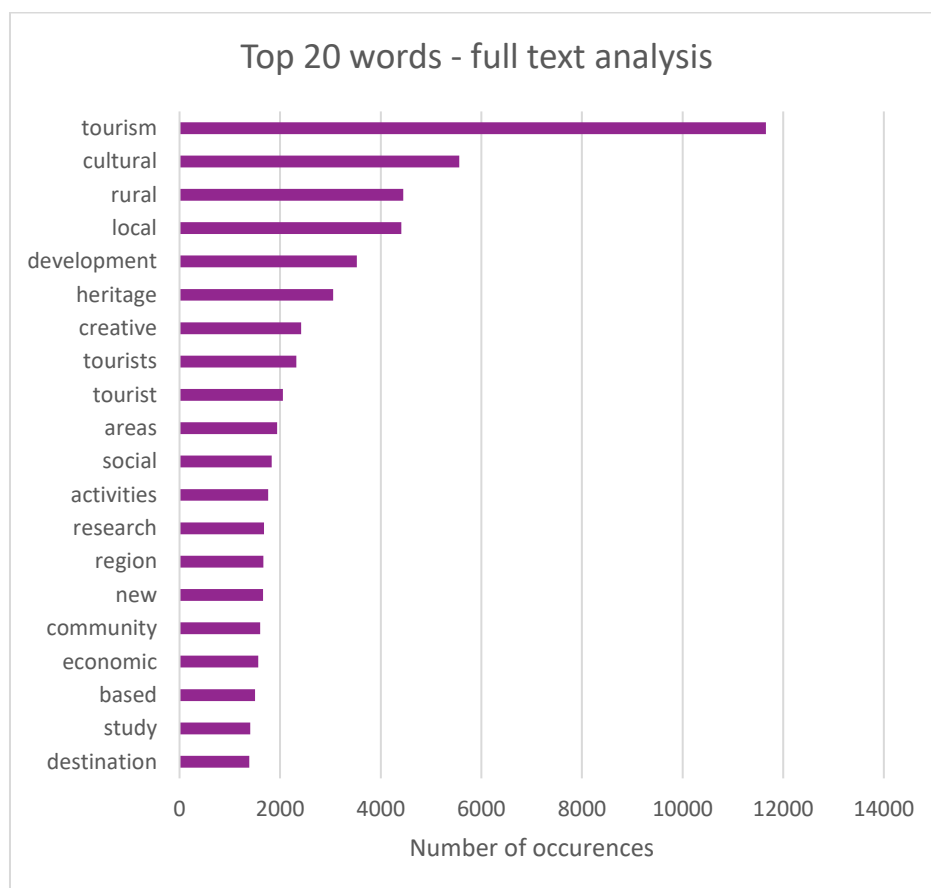
In the full text sources, Portugal and Spain were by far the most frequently mentioned countries. This correlates with the outputs of the CREATOUR project on creative tourism as well as the Spanish focus on wine and gastronomy. Italy and Serbia were the countries with the most mentions that also fall in the target macro-regions.

Figure 3.3: Frequency of country mentions in full text sources
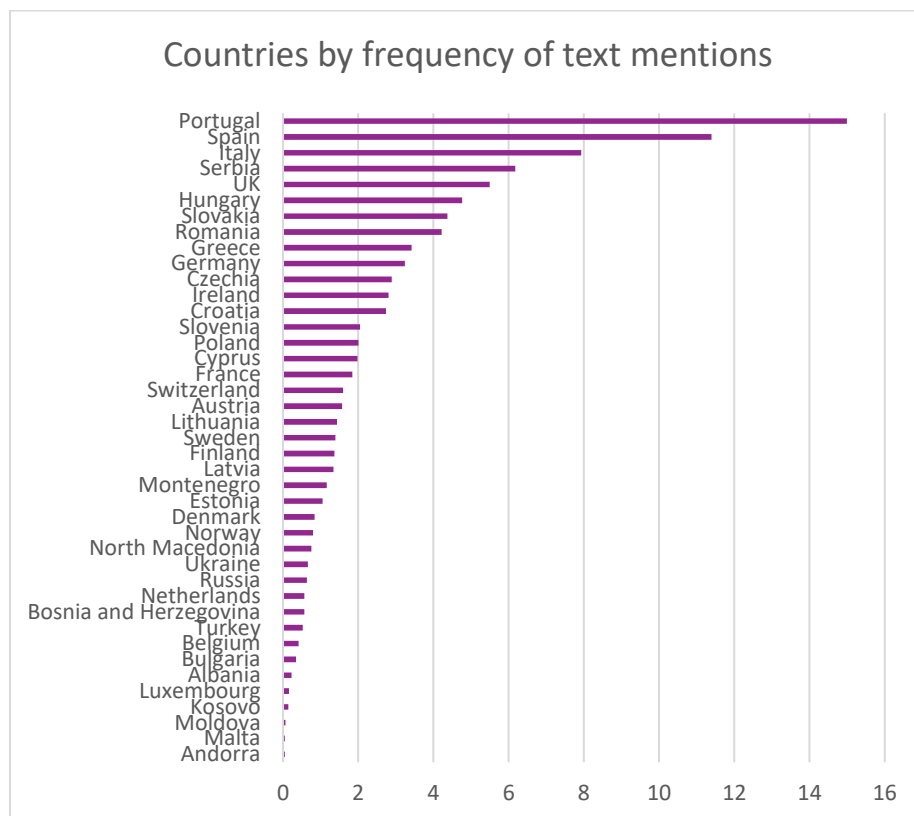
The macro-region with the most country references in the full text sources was the Danube, followed by the Adriatic and Ionian (Figure 3.4). The Baltic Sea was only covered by just over 10% of sources.

Figure 3.4: Number of references by macro-region
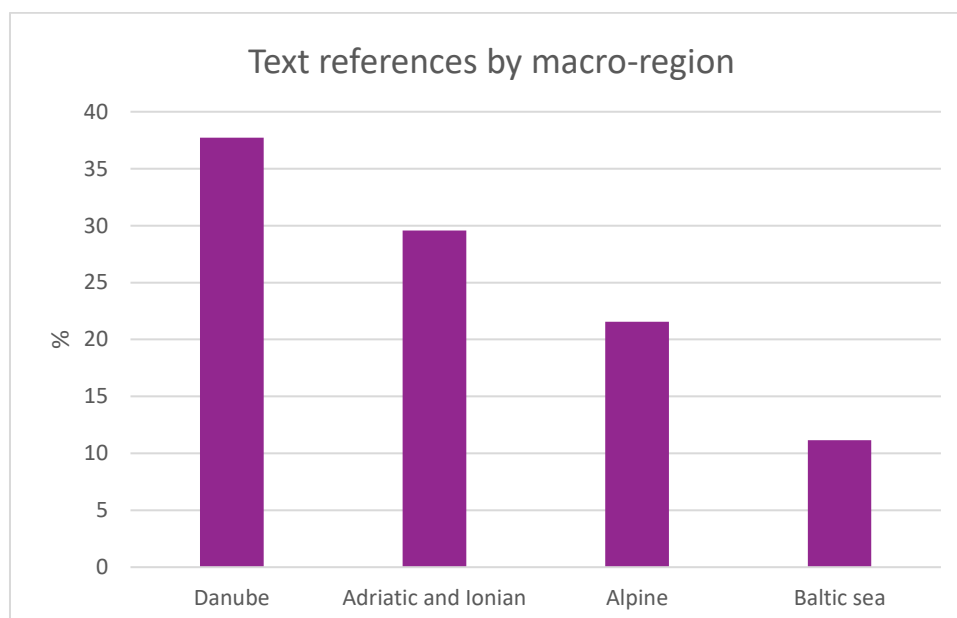
There is an imbalance in proportion to the population of the different macro-regions (Figure 3.5), with the Baltic receiving a relatively low proportion of mentions in relation to the resident population, and the Adriatic and Ionian region being relatively heavily referenced.

Figure 3.5: Number of full text references by macro-region vs population
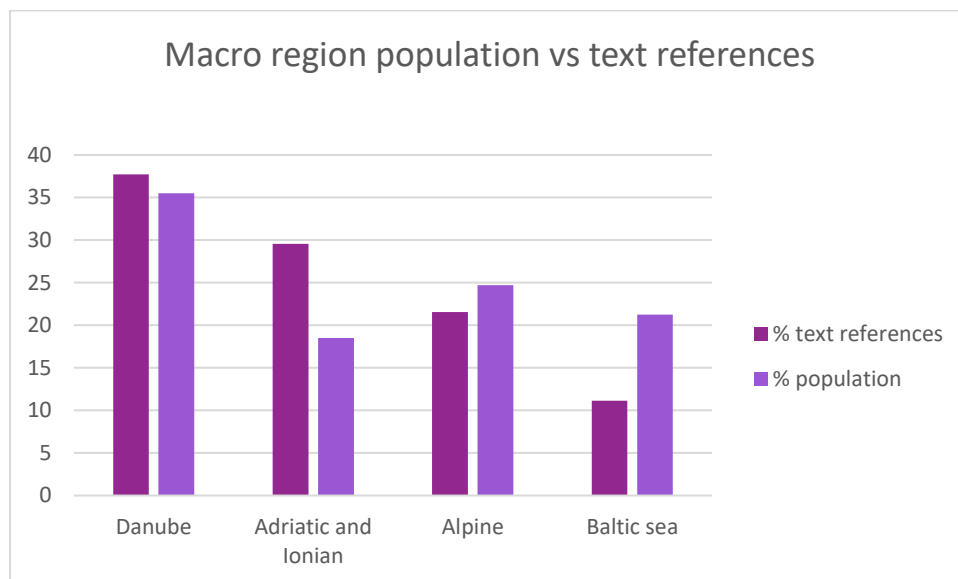
There was a closer correspondence between the number of references to the different macro-regions and their share of international tourist arrivals (Figure 3.6). The Danube is the only region that is significantly over-represented in the full text sources relative to its share of international tourism.

Figure 3.6: Number of full text references by macro-region vs share of international tourist arrivals
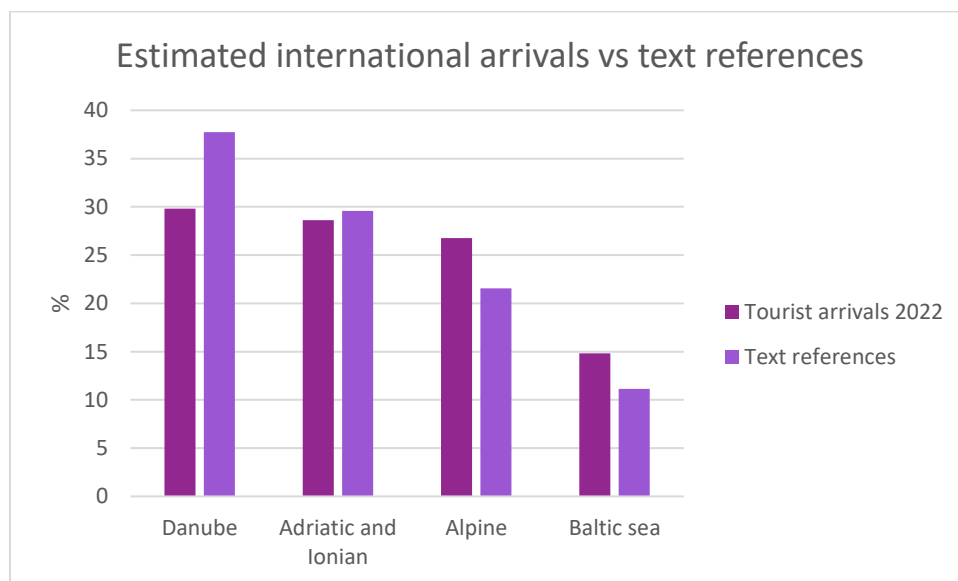
In terms of the most frequent authors on CCT in RRA, Greg Richards (8 sources), Nancy Duxbury (7) and Paula Remoaldo (6) have the most publications (Figure 3.7). The latter two were active in the CREATOUR project on creative tourism (CREATOUR, 2020). These are followed by Anna Trono, Juan Pulido-Fernández, Elisabeth Kanstenholz and Juliana Alves, with five publications each. Of the top seven authors, four were based in Portugal, and all except one were based in southern Europe. This explains to some extent the pattern of publications by country.

Figure 3.7: Most frequently cited authors

Most frequent authors (3 sources or more)
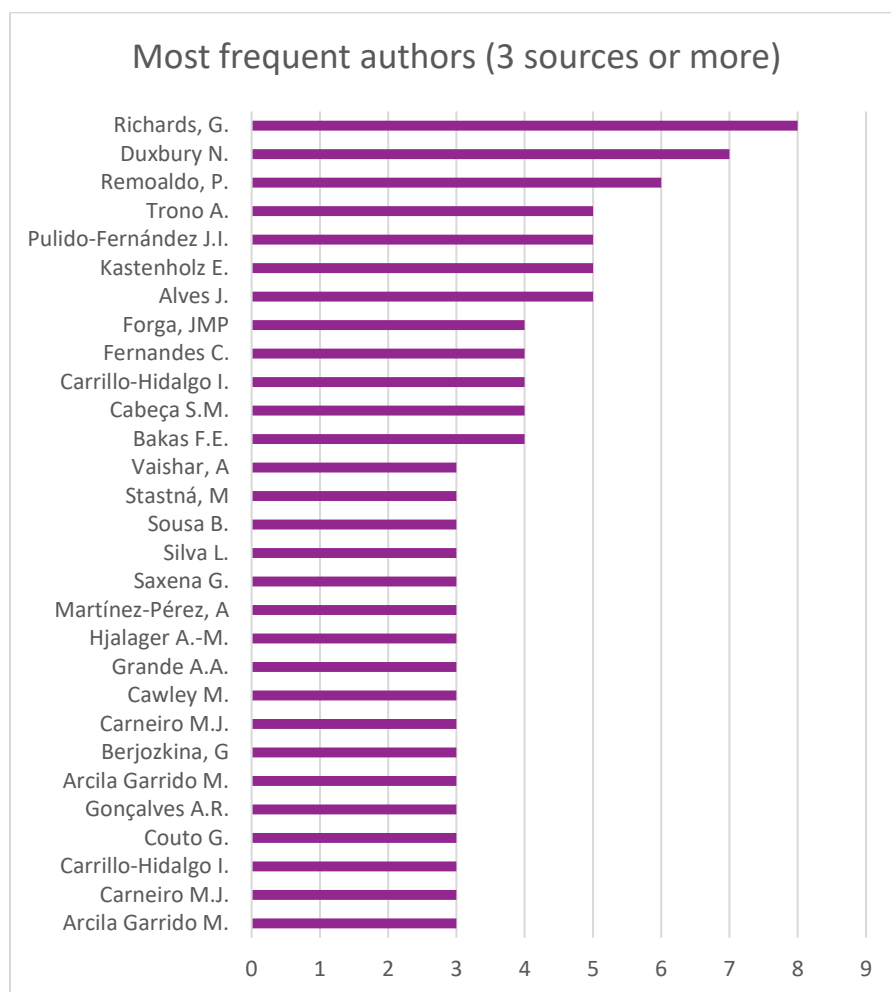
The majority of the relevant publications in the Web of Science (WOS) database appeared since 2019, reflecting the general increase in tourism publishing over this period (Figure 3.8). An increase in publications was seen between 2006 and 2017, but there was more marked growth in 2019 to 2023.

Figure 3.8: Publication date of sources in WOS
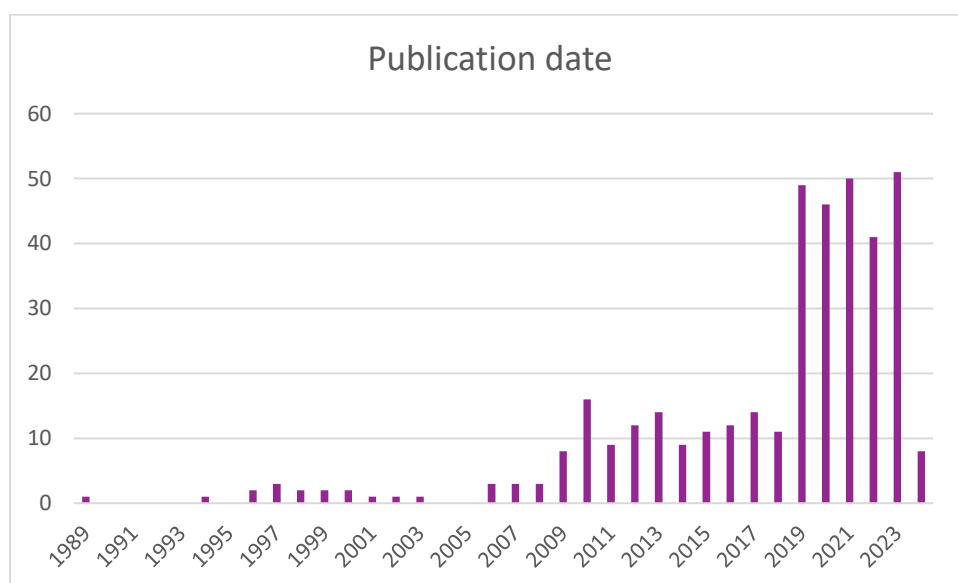
Publication date

The WOS sources mainly related to cultural tourism, with creative tourism publications only increasing notably from 2018 onwards (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Cultural and creative tourism sources in WOS by date
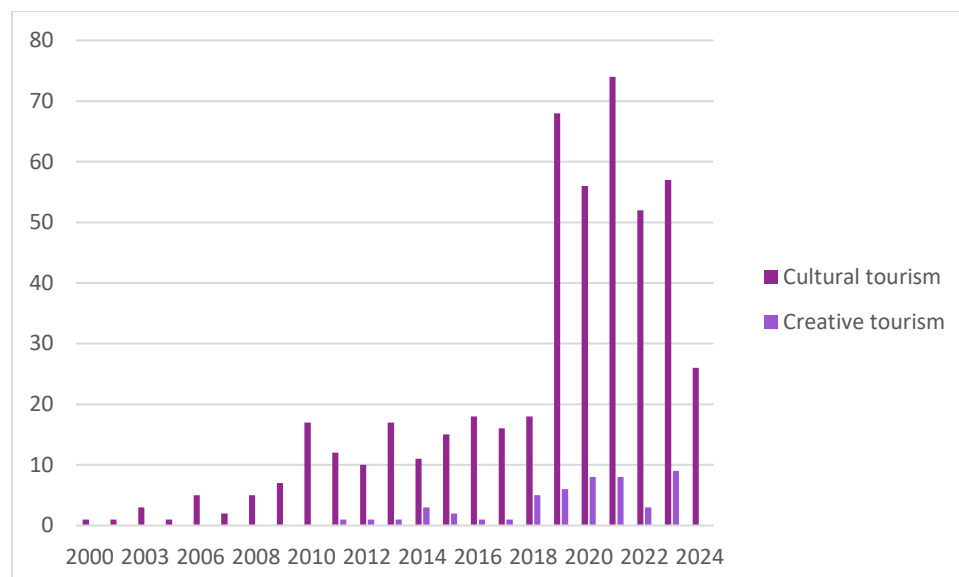
An analysis of Google Scholar sources for the period 1990 to 2024 shows the steady increase in cultural tourism publications over the past 30 years (Figure 3.10). The Google Scholar database includes a much wider range of publications than WOS, including grey literature and sources published in languages other than English.

Figure 3.10: Cultural tourism publications in Google Scholar 1990-2024
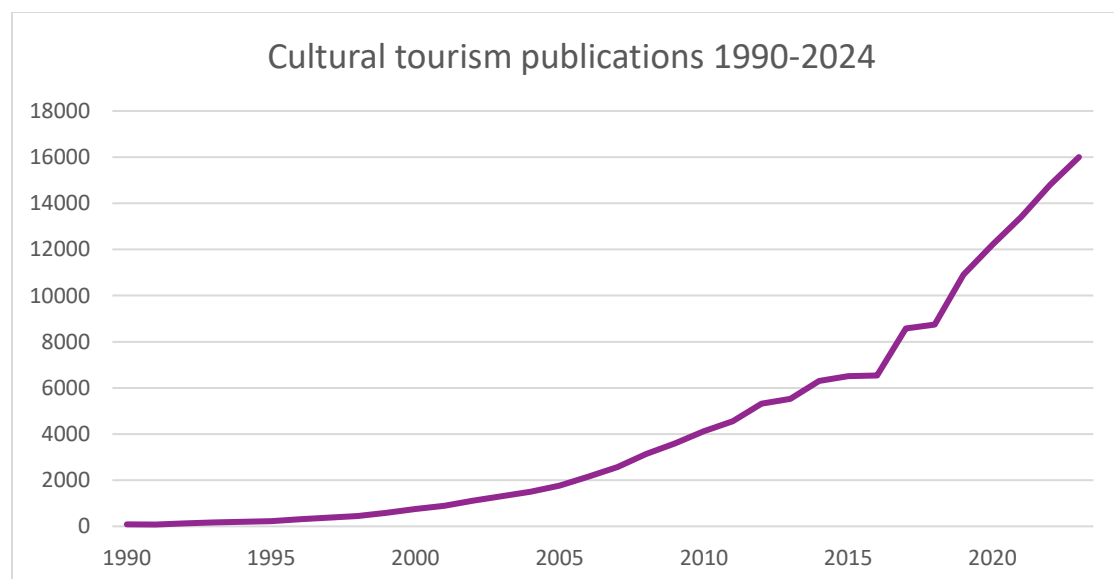
When analysed as a percentage of all tourism publications, cultural tourism publications accounted for a relatively small proportion of the total until 2016. From 2016 until 2024 the percentage of cultural tourism publications rose from less than 1% to over 6% by 2024 (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11: Cultural tourism publications as a percentage of all tourism publications in Google Scholar 1990-2024
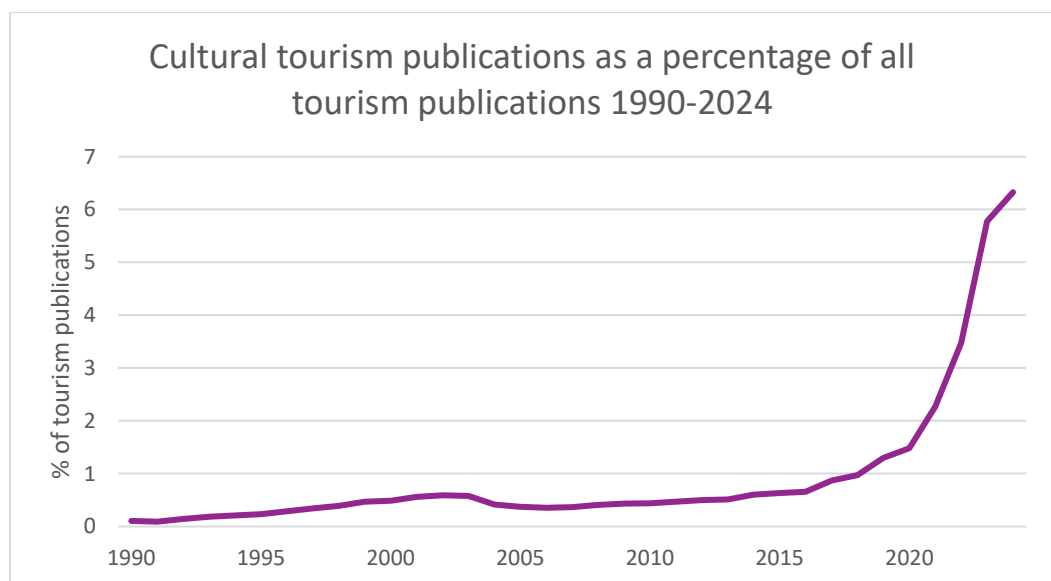
There has also been a marked growth in publications on creative tourism in Google Scholar (Figure 3.12). There were very few publications between 2000 and 2005, but in 2006 the output began to grow significantly.

Figure 3.12: Creative tourism publications in Google Scholar 1990 - 2023
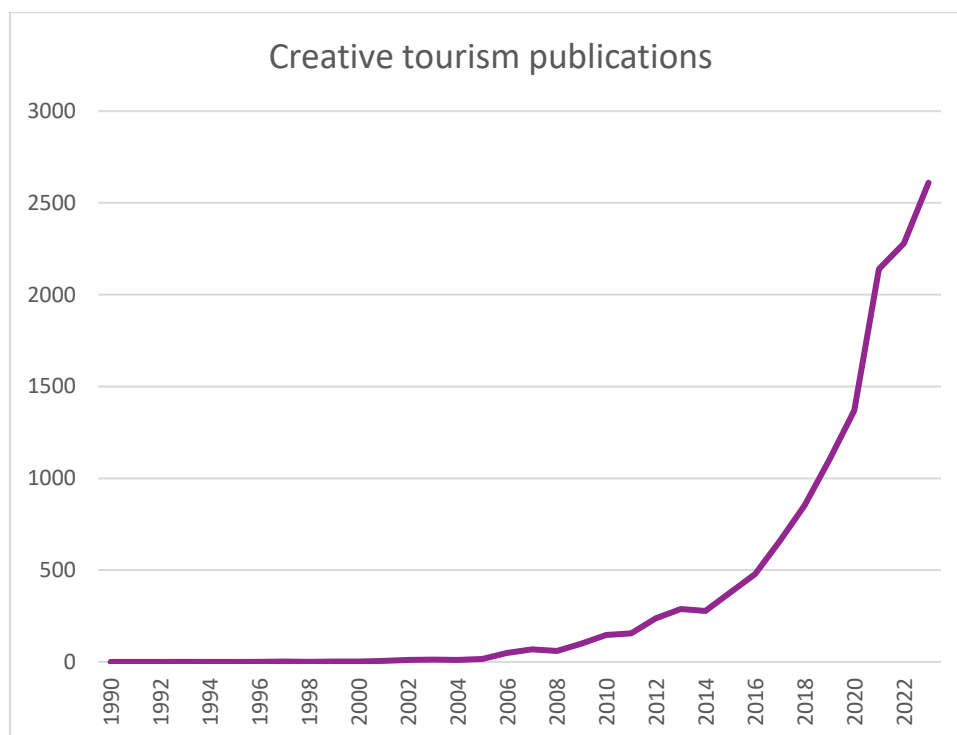
Creative tourism publications have also increased in proportion to cultural tourism publications (Figure 3.13), from around 2% in 2011 to 4% in 2016, followed by exponential growth between 2016 and 2021, when creative tourism publications reached 16% of the level of cultural tourism publications.

Figure 3.13: Creative tourism publications as a percentage of cultural tourism publications 1990-2024
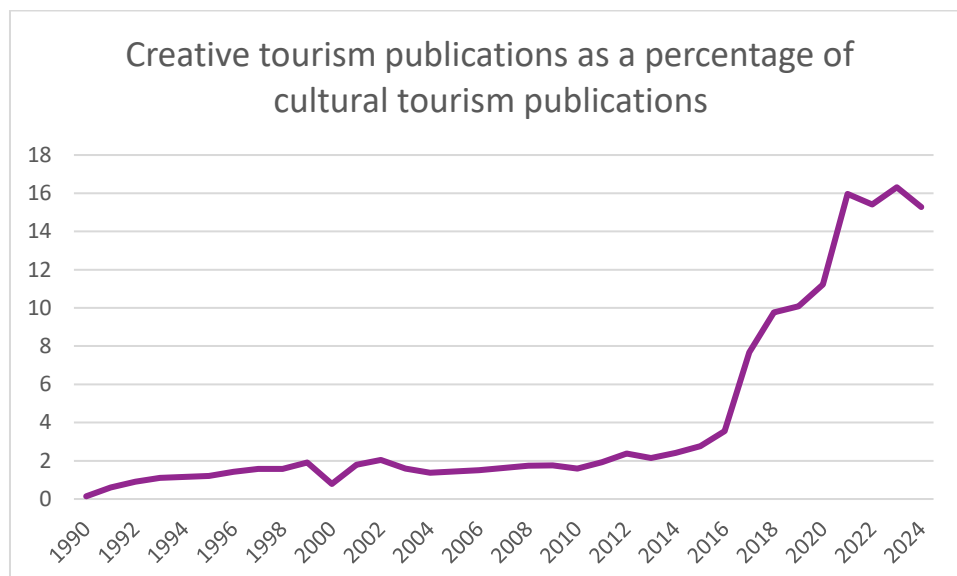
The growth of the cultural tourism literature has been largely paralleled by publications on heritage tourism, although the latter has grown more slowly (Figure 3.14). There has also been relatively little work on cultural and creative tourism publications related to RRA, particularly compared to the large number of sources linked to urban areas. For example, a search for papers related to cultural tourism and rural areas in Google Scholar for 2023 revealed 4,900 sources, compared with 11,400 for cities or urban areas.

Figure 3.14: Cultural tourism and heritage tourism publications in Google Scholar 1990-2023

There has been a marked shift in heritage publications in the new Millenium, with tangible heritage research growing much more slowly than publication output on intangible heritage (Figure 3.15). This pattern is also repeated in the national literature reviews (see Section 4.3.1, for example). This represents an opportunity for RRA, where intangible heritage resources are more plentiful than tangible heritage resources.

Figure 3.15: Tangible and intangible heritage publications in Google Scholar 1990-2023
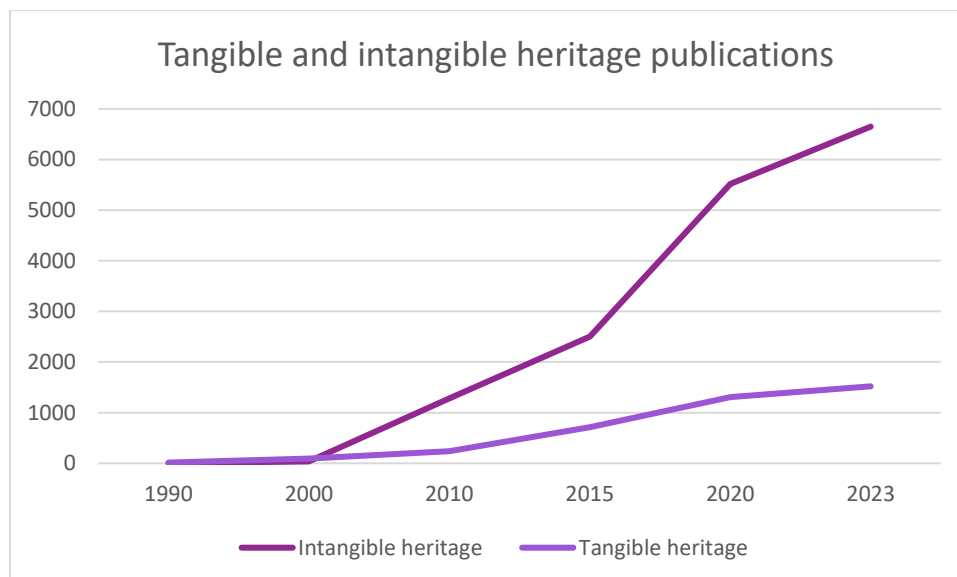
In line with the cultural tourism literature in general (Richards 2021f), research on CCT in RRA shows a significant increase in recent years. In particular, research on cultural tourism has grown as a proportion of all tourism research. Creative tourism remains a relatively small proportion the total research output on CCT, but in the last five years, creative tourism research has mushroomed, stimulated by EU research projects in this field.

In spite of this growth, relatively few CCT sources deal with RRA. There is a focus in the literature on a handful of larger countries, most   notably Spain, Portugal and Italy. One exception is Serbia, which has generated a large number of CCT studies relative to the size of the country. One reason is the largely rural nature of Serbian cultural tourism. National patterns feed through into differences between macro-regions, with the Baltic macro region in particular being under-represented. In contrast the Adriatic and Ionian and Danube regions are relatively strongly represented in the CCT literature in RRA. The Alpine and Baltic macro regions have relatively few sources in relation to their share of international arrivals, which means that relative tourism pressure does not always translate into greater research effort. This may reflect a relatively traditional view of tourism as a largely coastal issue.

3.2   CCT geographies

The analysis of the literature reviews, the abstracts and full text documents revealed a number of major themes relating to CCT in RRA. These included issues relating to the nature of RRAs (rural resources, rural tourism demand, marketing and branding) as well as specific themes related to CCT (cultural tourism demand, cultural tourism trends, links between tourism and the cultural and creative industries). There were also several themes linked to mobility and the low population density of RRAs (Cultural routes, clustering of resources, cross-border collaboration, urban-rural links). Impacts on the local community and economic development were also frequently mentioned (entrepreneurship, sustainability, accommodation models). Finally, a number of themes were related to more holistic approaches to the subject (governance issues, place and placemaking). In the following section we look first at general trends in CCT, then turn to geographies of CCT, before examining the tangible and

intangible resources involved, and finally the role of different forms and levels of governance in CCT in RRAs.

3.2.1   Trends in cultural and creative tourism

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism has consistently been identified as an important component of tourism demand. Estimates from the 1990s onwards indicated that about 40% of international tourism trips were cultural (Bywater, 1993; Richards 2021c), which was empirically confirmed through a global survey in 2017 (UNWTO, 2018). However, cultural tourism demand tends to focus on urban destinations, with less attention for other emerging cultural destinations, particularly those in rural areas (UNWTO, 2023a). This underlines the uneven distribution of CCT demand and supply, which also creates qualitative differences between central and peripheral locations.

The UNWTO (2023a) argues that culture is becoming more important to tourists, as they become more sophisticated and see local experiences as central to their trip. A quarter of the experiences searched for on TripAdvisor were directly related to cultural activities including museums, monuments and cultural events, and another 25% had some cultural content.

The importance of cultural tourism is reflected in the many national programmes promoting it. For example, in Montenegro, the Cultural Tourism Development Programme (with Action Plan 2019 – 2021) sees cultural tourism as a national priority (Moric, Pekovic, Janinovic, Perovic & Griesbeck, 2021). Cultural tourism is being promoted to balance the predominance of beach tourism and to support cultural heritage. Particular potential is identified in intangible heritage which "probably represents the most innovative segment of cultural tourism thanks to its 'live', rich, creative, and dynamic character." Similarly, Cultural Tourism has been a national priority in Croatia since 2004, seen as vital for dispersing tourists and fostering regional development.

Some European countries also collect specific data on cultural tourism. Italy has data on the destinations and behaviour of international cultural tourists, and visitors to 'art cities'. In Spain, data on cultural tourism are collected via the *Movimientos turísticos en fronteras* (FRONTUR) survey and the *Encuesta de turismo de residentes*. For example, the domestic tourism surveys for 2023 indicated that almost 12% of trips were taken primarily for cultural reasons. These data also indicate a rising trend in cultural trips in recent years, with a strong recovery since the pandemic.

Figure 3.16: Cultural tourism trips by Spanish residents
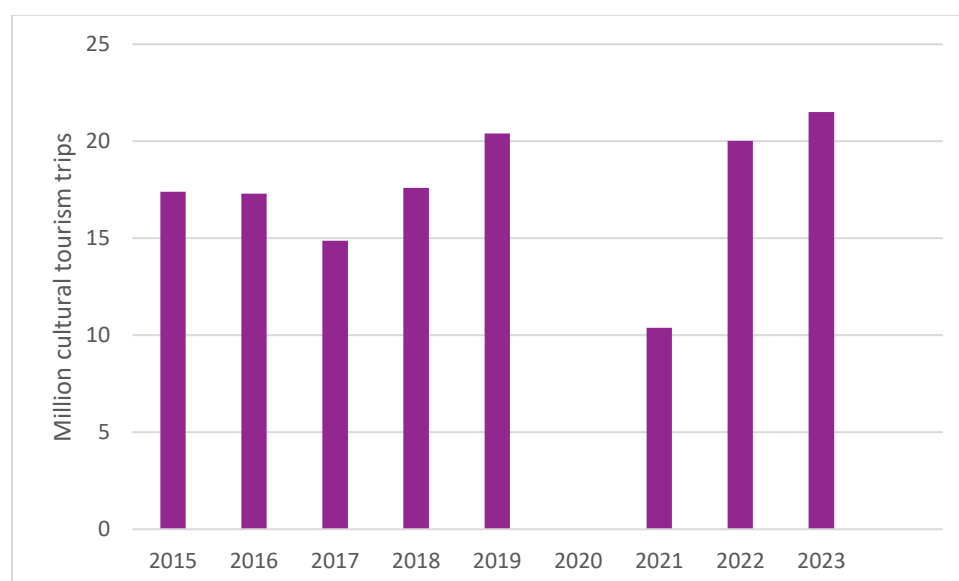
Creative tourism

Although creative tourism is a relatively new tourism niche in Europe, a number of studies of creative tourism demand have now started to appear, mainly focussing on the local level. Creative tourism research has focussed on both rural and urban environments, with an increase in the latter in recent years as the link between the creative industries and tourism has become a more frequent area of research in cities.

Creative tourism was originally defined by Richards and Raymond (2000, p. 18) as: "Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken." This definition makes an important link between the creative activities of tourists and the creativity embedded in place.

In the Alentejo region of Portugal, Duarte (2024) underlines this link by showing that creative tourism can have positive impacts on both the community and tourists. However, it requires a well-structured strategy to promote the Central Alentejo based on its distinctive resources, creating a sense of "authenticity" and identity that sets it apart. It is important to maintain cultural diversity and uniqueness, allowing the community, as well as the tourism sector, to become sustainable. Creative tourism is seen as a viable alternative for low-density territories such as the Alentejo.

Dias, Silva, Patuleia and González-Rodríguez (2023) found that in developing creative tourism organizing local events worked like a "magnet" to attract knowledge and visitors. They argue that sustainable business models are closely linked to place and community involvement. Local knowledge assimilation mediates the relationship between local knowledge acquisition and the' self-efficacy and innovativeness of local enterprises. Local knowledge therefore needs to be integrated and applied in tourist experiences and narratives.

Creative tourism can be seen either as an alternative to traditional cultural tourism, providing new types of experiences to entice tourists to visit new areas or to enliven a tired tourism product, or it can be seen as an extension of cultural tourism, moving from a more static to a more active and involved form of cultural tourism (Richards, 2011a). In urban areas the rapid growth of "mass cultural tourism" since the turn of the Millennium has tended to promote creative tourism as an alternative to passive forms of cultural tourism such as sightseeing or visits to city centre sites. In rural areas, creative tourism has often been developed as an extension of existing cultural or rural tourism products, for example by developing creative workshops and taster experiences to involve tourists in local culture (Csapó, Palenčiková & Csóka, 2022).

Unlike cultural tourism, there has been little assessment of the size or composition of the creative tourism market. The basic reason for this is that creative tourism tends to be a specialised niche, attracting relatively small numbers of visitors. This also makes it difficult to analyse the creative tourism market, or to quantify the impact and effects of creative tourism development.

Remoaldo et al. (2020) analysed the motivations for creative tourism and identified the need to develop a creative tourism motivations scale as well as qualitative research on the motivations of international tourists. Recent research by Matteucci and Smith (2024) has begun to provide new qualitative perspectives on creative tourism motivations, underling the importance of a eudaimonic perspective.

In recent years there has been growing attention for the concept of "cultural creative tourism", which implies a mix of both cultural and creative tourism elements (Qi-Jie, Li, Lin & Fu-Biao, 2012). Most of this work comes from China, where the development of cultural creative tourism has been identified as a national priority. The concept of cultural creative tourism is very broad, and includes visits to tangible heritage attractions as well as creative performances and cultural landscapes. For the purposes of our review, we have decided to analyse cultural tourism and creative tourism as separate concepts, because these have different conceptual bases, forms and related business models.

Many research gaps were found in the creative tourism field, including identifying potential creative tourists, measuring performance, the relationship of creative tourism and creative industries, the spatial distribution of creative tourism, impacts, developing reliable creative experience scales, the sociocultural dimensions shaping creative tourism, and the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention. The relatively general nature of most research gaps reflects the relative youth of this field. More specifically, Islam and Sadhukhan (2024) identify a need to examine governance structures, and to examine the issue of intellectual property related to different business models. This echoes the identification of 'serial reproduction' of creative tourism business models in rural areas in Indonesia (Blapp & Mitas, 2019).

3.2.2 Trends in rural tourism

The UNWTO (2021) defines rural tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle / culture, angling and sightseeing. Rural Tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics: i) low population density, ii) landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry and iii) traditional social structure and lifestyle". Panzer -Krause (2020, p. 236) defines rural tourism as "touristic activities that are focused on the consumption of rural landscapes, artefacts, cultures and experiences." Signifiers of the rural include fresh air, visually pleasing landscapes, historic farm buildings and other forms of countryside capital.

According to the European Parliament (2023) the origins of rural tourism lie in agritourism and farm stays, typically linked to countryside experiences including physical activities connected with nature. It is small- scale and involves many small private businesses. But rural tourism has "moved away from farm-stays – and grew into a complex business environment that today includes accommodation, food and beverage services, attractions, sports and nature-related activities, arts and crafts, museums, libraries, entertainment, etc." Figures from Eurostat indicate that in 2021, 43.8 % of tourist beds in the EU were in rural areas, which accounted for 37 % of all nights spent at tourist accommodation. The European Parliament's (2022) report 'A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040' sees recreation, tourism and preservation of culture and traditions as basic aspects of rural areas, alongside food production, management of natural resources and protection of natural landscapes.

The demand for rural tourism grew during the Covid-19 pandemic, as people escaped cities (European Parliament, 2023). The UNWTO Tourism Barometer 2024 also indicated that nature and mountain tourism have recovered rapidly after the pandemic, arguably reflecting the growing importance of sustainability in consumer choice. Remote and rural destinations were predicted to attract visitors in the post-COVID era, thus continuing to provide an important lever for economic development and growth. However, the experience of the pandemic also underlines the strong dependence of rural areas on urban source markets.

The European Parliament (2023) mentions many benefits to local communities of rural tourism, including job creation, strengthening the local economy, maintaining services, improving living conditions, ensuring generational renewal and slowing down depopulation. Tourism can also help conserve natural and cultural heritage and sustain the rural character of an area, including the traditional way of life and traditional crafts and skills. But there are also 'dis-benefits', such as damage to fragile ecosystems, noise and litter. House prices can rise beyond the reach of local people, due to outsiders buying second homes. Tourism can also bring urbanisation and over-reliance on the tourism industry.

Rural tourism demand

In France, Bel, Lacroix, Lyser, Rambonilaza and Turpin (2015) analysed domestic demand for tourism in three regions. Although there is no difference between urban and rural tourism in demographic terms,

there are distinctions in terms of activities. They identified five main stay segments based on activities undertaken: "water-based activities", "outdoor activities and experiencing nature", "Nature and heritage discovery", "gastronomy" and "doing nothing". This last segment arguably represents the most traditional form of rural tourism. Comparing their results with studies in other countries (Scotland, Spain and Finland) they suggest the main rural tourism market segments comprise people interested in outdoor activities and excursions or family holidays. A large proportion of visitors staying in rented accommodation during the summer are involved in longer stays for water-based activities or outdoor pursuits. They are families with children, or groups of young adults. Visitors more interested in rural culture (gastronomy) and amenities (visits to natural and heritage sites) are older visitors from the low and middle classes. In Spain, An and Alarcón (2021) identified three rural tourism segments from netnographic analysis: comfort-driven visitor, rural ambiance spender, and active leisure seeker.

Pesonen and Komppula (2010) segmented Finnish rural tourists into well-being segments according to reported interests. Only 16% of rural tourists were not interested in any kind of well-being products or services. The most frequent consumers are middle-aged women, but there is potential to target younger consumers as well. They suggest more research is needed on the distribution channels used for rural well-being tourism, and the differences between domestic and international visitors.

The nature of rural tourism demand also depends on location. In particular, areas close to major urban areas will tend to have a high level of day trips and short stays. Bertacchini, Nuccio and Durio (2021) also identify an effect of urban location of tourists. Analysing the use of a provincial museum card in Italy, they found that those living in more peripheral and less affluent quarters of the city were more likely to visit museums in rural areas close to the city. This runs counter to the view of cultural tourists as   having a higher socioeconomic status, although it matches the preference of low income households for proximate tourist activities, as well as the work of Bel et al. (2015) in France. Location is also important for rural cultural tourism development. As part of the SPOT Horizon 2020 project on Social and Innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism, Šťastná and Vaishar (2023) examined two destinations in Southern Moravia. Dolní Kounice is a destination for suburban trips for residents of the city of Brno, cyclists and for family trips, and heritage was a bonus rather than the aim of the trip. Lednice was primarily a destination for tourists looking for attractive places with comprehensive services and for those who visited the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Lednice is therefore more focused on the growth of tourism.

Challenges in rural tourism

Analysing rural tourism in different Mediterranean countries, Gómez-Ullate, Rieutort, Kamara, Santos, Pirra, and Solís (2020) find that many regions face similar demographic challenges. Depopulation makes it difficult to sustain services and creates complex relationships between newcomers and 'entrenched' rural communities. There is resistance to change and innovation in many rural areas. They see 'learning territories' as an effective model to address these challenges.

Marton, Raffay, Barcza, and Gonda (2021) note that rural cultural tourism development in the Dráva Region of Hungary is limited by the poor quality and tourism potential of heritage attractions. There is a lack of management and marketing activity, and most attractions are visited during tours across the region and generate few overnight stays. Nagy, Káposzta and Meta (2017) analyse the Albanian National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020, which addresses the challenge of balanced development between regions. Migration is a major issue, leading to rural depopulation. They note several challenges in tourism policy, including improving the image of the country, increasing quality and human resources and encouraging private investment.

Rural areas used to be conceived of primarily as areas of agricultural production, but this view is beginning to change. In addition to the expanding use of the rural as a consumption space for leisure and tourism, we are seeing new economic activities emerge in rural areas. David Bell's (2015) analysis of the 'Cottage Economy' examines the growth of the creative industries in rural areas. He notes that "a decade ago the dominant 'script' concerning the creative industries tended to assume a particular

inner-city location – that creative industries are quintessentially urban". This view has recently been nuanced by studies identifying the growth of creativity in small cities (Richards & Duif, 2019), suburbs, 'peripheral' regions and the countryside. Luckman (2012) examined different forms of rural, regional and remote creativity. Similarly, Saxena (2016) argues that rural areas have been transformed into consumption spaces through the staging processes involved in tourism. Aquilino, Harris and Wise (2021) argue that 'rurality' is "a collective connection whereby people share social and cultural constructions founded in place and community traditions."

In Spain, Paniagua (2016) notes the development of a 'New Rurality', supported by events and festivals. A differentiated rural past is performed in such events, constructing an acceptable rurality: "The rural event, or festival, creates particular and differentiated spaces, ultimately distinguishing …. localities, by producing signs and playing with subjective notions of time (history) and place (space)" (p.116). The different signs of ruralness can become a source of conflict in the community, as different groups emphasise different symbolic elements of history and space: "Newcomers use the mythical nature of rurality, helping to produce or reinvent the lost rural community. This is a new community with symbolic components based on ancient beliefs or customs, but with a new social composition and use of the space. A space which has often (almost completely) lost its ancient agricultural or livestock farming functionality" (p. 126). Paniagua (2016) points out the continued dependence of rural spaces on the urban, which is inevitable because of the formation of the rural idealisation of the rural in a predominantly urban society. New forms of leisure, such as festivals are used to recover a lost rurality, giving rural places an unusual, unique, and exclusive character. The arrival of newcomers strengthens the "mythical nature of rurality", helping to reinvent lost rural communities. New rural communities with symbolic components based on ancient beliefs, but with new social compositions and spatial configurations.

Vicente, Sánchez and Castillo (2020) also identify the emergence of a 'new rurality', which they see reflected in attitudes to shepherding in Spain. The new rurality emerged as a concept with the transition from the 19th Century view of the rural as museum, towards more flexible concepts of authenticity that present the rural as a living space. In cultural terms, a shift from the rural world as guardian of essences to a sustainable and future laboratory. This turn is now being incorporated into programmes such as the Towns of Madrid programme, which provides an example of good practice of sustainable tourism development in peripheral and rural areas with high cultural potential near large urban destinations (UNWTO, 2023b).

3.2.3   Tourism in Remote Areas

Remote areas are often equated with peripheral areas, particularly in relation to EU policies. The concept of the periphery is of course relative to the notion of a centre, and in a European context, peripheral areas lie far from the centres of economic and political power in north-western and central Europe. As Cheer, Mostafanezhad and Lew (2022) observe:

"The term peripheral area encompasses the locational and functional context commonly associated with remote islands and archipelagos, desert areas, alpine regions, rural locations, indigenous communities, and other areas at the edge and beyond metropolitan centres of geopolitical and sociocultural power and influence. These areas have been under increasing pressure to accommodate placemaking practices of new residents and investors from urban cores" (p. 495)

But because the idea of peripherality is relative, even those located in the 'periphery' can also see themselves as being central in their own lifeworld. We also need to be aware that there are different types of peripherality. In terms of tourism, for example, very different models of tourism have developed in peripheral regions of the north (based on winter sports) and the south (mass beach tourism to peripheral islands).

For example, EU Cohesion Policy (European Commission, 2022b) takes a geographical approach in distinguishing specific areas such as:

- Border regions and cross-border cooperation;
- Remote, islands, mountainous or sparsely populated areas; and
- Outermost regions (ultramarine territories of EU member states, for example in the Caribbean).

The main challenges of such peripheral areas include a lack of adequate transport links and location far from markets, leading to growth limitations and a lack of economies of scale. They may be vulnerable to climate change, and they are often lacking in human capital and adequate health, social and education services. Their research and innovation capacity also tends to be weak. However, there are also opportunities, in terms of natural resources, wellbeing, etc.

In addition to the 'outer periphery' of EU border areas, the PROFECY (Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe) project identified 'inner peripherality', covering the EU as a whole, often along national boundaries which lack good cross-border communications. In terms of the outer periphery, a recent OECD (2023) report looks at the potential for the cultural and creative sectors in the 'outermost regions' (OR), including the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands. There is potential for the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) to contribute to local development in the EU outermost regions. Increases in cultural tourism, and the growth of the Creative Industries offer significant opportunities for EU remote regions to expand their cultural and creative sectors.

Capitalising on tourism assets can help support the CCS, and strengthening the cultural and creative ecosystem can also boost tourism revenues. As European regions, ORs can benefit from national and EU support and their geographic location enables access to other major markets. The specific culture of EU ORs is itself an important cultural asset.

The report sees cultural tourism as a major market for the ORs and their unique cultural heritage. Developing coordinated cultural tourism policies can strengthen both the tourism sector and CCS. For example, supporting the use of local creative content in place branding and promoting supply chain linkages between tourism and CCS SMEs could help support mutually reinforcing synergies between the sectors. Moreover, producing creative content, such as film and television, which showcase a particular locality has been shown to boost tourism and contribute to positive place branding (OECD, 2022a).

The cultural and creative sectors are often deeply intertwined with the tourism sector, offering opportunities to develop cross-sector initiatives. Complementarities between culture and tourism support innovation in tourism (e.g. through new digital technologies), promoting places internationally (e.g. through creative content such as film) and supporting more sustainable tourism (e.g. by contributing to the diversification of tourist destinations).

In the Azores and Madeira, longstanding cultural policies support CCS and deliver cultural services to citizens. Both Portuguese ORs have grant programmes for CCS production, heritage protection programmes and a broad set of cultural services for local residents. In the Azores, cultural policy looks to integrate with Europe whilst leveraging CCS for development. The Regional Cultural Affairs Office aims to preserve, defend and enhance the islands' cultural offerings and their presence in European cultural heritage. The Azores sees culture as attracting international tourism flows as well as addressing local social and health issues. In Madeira, culture is seen as important in generating employment and supporting wellbeing.

In the northern periphery of the EU, indigenous groups are also important. From their position in the supposed peripheral Arctic regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland, the indigenous Sámi see themselves as central, and economic development and tourism initiatives coming from outside as peripheral to their society and culture. Björn and Lüthje (2023) take a posthumanist view of the practices developed by the Sámi to sensitise tourists to their culture. This challenges the Western

dichotomy between nature and culture, which is reflected in the division between nature-based and cultural tourism. The entangled relationships between human beings, nature, and Sámi culture can best be presented place-based approaches to teaching tourists about culture in natural environments. It is important that tourists are sensitised holistically to these entanglements to combat the common cultural insensitivity exemplified by assimilation, stereotyping, and cultural appropriation of the destination (Marques & Oliveira, 2023).

In line with this practice-based approach, Björn and Lüthje (2023) emphasise the importance of 'Doing in nature', or 'nature-based creative tourism'. Activities like making fire and cooking in nature can offer engaging, experiences for visitors, presenting local values and teaching new skills. Tourists learn about the Sámi relationship with nature and how they can relate to nature in less human-centred and more sustainable ways, helping them develop a cultural appreciation of nature.

The link between nature and Sámi identity is analysed by De Bernardi (2021) in the context of ecotourism. Tourism can be a way for the Sámi to re-negotiate their identities, through activities involving their cultures. Sámi entrepreneurs emphasise authenticity in their marketing, but they have to be careful about the expectations that this can create in potential customers. This may include a degree of interaction that locals may find difficult to offer.

In Greenland, Cooper (2020) examined the role of the Katuaq cultural centre, which offers events for Greenlandic speakers to create inclusivity in the local community. However, in the "new cultural tourism", tourists increasingly expect access to the everyday life of locals, so community spaces become attractions. Katuaq shows this requires more than the provision of common spaces. Respondents from the creative industries see a lack of creativity within the centre:

"Doors should be opening - not just a conference hall, not just a cinema. It could be so much more [...] I would love to be able to say, I'm going to Katuaq tomorrow at 8. I want to see these guys printing photography, inside what used to be a kitchen. And I would like to see a local artist paint her paintings, have a cup of coffee with her…" (p. 66).

Inuk, a local artist and photographer, envisages Katuaq's rooms being used for creative purposes – as studios and workshops, and rented out to local artists. Visitors to Katuaq would be invited to interact with the artists and watch them work. This would benefit the artists themselves, who would receive input from visitors, and for the visitors who can witness culture being created, learn about artistic processes and have dialogue with local artists. This approaches the creative tourism ideal of tourists becoming creative partners or co-creators.

de Gallier (2024) considers the position of the Greenland Inuit in the face of tourism development. "Opening up Greenland makes it more accessible; it draws it closer to the global economy. But on the other side, it's feeding socio-ecological challenges at a very fast pace." Greenland had a 30% increase in tourism in 2022, basically because of cruise ships. Throughout the summer of 2023, there were several smaller towns with 2 or 3 cruise ships docking on the same day, with hundreds or thousands of passengers. This raises the question of how sustainable such large-scale tourism flows can be in thinly populated remote areas. But the attitude to tourism among locals is still positive (81.5% positive responses in 2023). (Visit Greenland, 2024).

Figure 3.17: Tourism in Greenland by transport mode 2015-2023

Source: Visit Greenland (2024)

Leban, Errmann, Seo and Voyer (2024) examine the development of 'mindful luxury' in the Faroe Islands. 'Luxury community-based tourism' combines experiential and socially responsible tourism within a luxury framework, while sustainable luxury demonstrates how environmental considerations can enhance the perceived integrity of luxury offerings. This approach centres on the practices linked to remoteness - not what remoteness is (because remoteness is a relative concept), but what remoteness does.

The Faroe Islands have positioned themselves as an exclusive and luxurious destination, offering a unique combination of exclusivity and a commitment to preserving cultural heritage and ecological integrity. A mindful approach redefines luxury experiences as 'transformational'. The compatibility between luxury and sustainability remains debateable, however. Luxury consumption is usually viewed as wasteful, but 'Mindful tourists', who disconnect from digital distractions and adapt to their surroundings are more likely to appreciate the value of sustainable practices, such as supporting local economies and minimizing environmental impact. Tourist narratives revealed a marked contrast between experiences in traditional luxury destinations—characterized by pampering and relaxation—and their Faroe Islands experience:

"Going to the Faroe Islands showed me what luxury is really about: it's about appreciating the little things, the essential things really of your life. I am thinking nature, people, connections, ancestry, food, culture. You don't get that when you have a hectic lifestyle – you don't have time, you don't have the energy to appreciate these things." (p. 4).

Leban et al. (2024) identified four atypical luxury travel practices—hoarding, savouring, reconnecting, and secluding.

- *Hoarding* as an atypical luxury travel practice of conscious knowledge-accumulation, cataloguing, curation, and meticulous planning.
- *Savouring* wherein tourists spend a considerable amount of time eating (in high-end restaurants), resting (in high-end accommodations), and taking the time to appreciate their experience.
- *Reconnecting* unfolds as tourists strive to disengage from urbanized and accelerated environments.
- *Secluding* tourists actively find ways to be physically and mentally alone.

Luxury consumption in the Faroe Islands links tourists with the local land and its inhabitants. This interaction promotes mindfulness, rendering luxury consumption more introspective.

Current thinking about remoteness has important links to indigenous communities and their links with nature. Movements to restore the rights of indigenous groups, and by extension the rights of the natural resources on which these communities depend, are gaining ground in some countries (e.g. New Zealand and Colombia - Gómez-Betancur, 2020). Legal rights for nature have an important cultural dimension, since they are usually related to the use of specific areas and natural resources by indigenous groups. The cultural and creative resources of these groups are in turn of potential interest to visitors. In Europe, the only significant indigenous groups that remain are the Sámi, the Inuit and a number of indigenous groups living in Russia and Siberia (Grote, 2006). These groups face significant challenges in terms of climate change, language retention and land rights. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 provides strong references to Indigenous Peoples' rights and notably foresees: "Support[ing] Indigenous peoples by advocating for their participation in relevant human rights and development processes and by upholding the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all decisions affecting them." Such support is important, as indigenous groups remain "Among the poorest in the world and richest culturally" (Diplomatic Service of the EU, 2018).

3.2.4   Clustering, networks and rural entrepreneurship

One of the major challenges of rural and particularly remote areas is low population density. The need to bring people together in RRA has generated a lot of attention for clustering and networking as tools for creating connections. The basic question for RRAs is how to replicate the spatial proximity usually present in densely populated areas? Two basic approaches seem to be relevant here. The formation of clusters that try to create critical mass in terms of knowledge and other resources, and networks linking actors dispersed across a wide geographical area (Scalabrini & Alves, 2022).   Critical mass can be achieved by clustering resources together physically, but links can also be made between resources in situ, creating a network in which tourists flow between resources.

In clustering, organisations or individuals are brought together in the same location to create critical mass and to generate spillover effects. In the cultural and creative sectors these effects are usually related to knowledge sharing and innovation. In rural areas, there are often clusters of creative people related to shared interests, such as colonies of artists (Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan, 2007; Brouder, 2012). This in turn is often related to the attractiveness and tranquillity of rural areas. In contrast, networks depend on links between different places to support collaboration between actors who are not co-located. Cultural Routes are effectively linear networks, which usually have a singular focus. In a network linking diffuse resources, a variety of spaces, places and resources can be dynamically linked together, developing a creative route linking creative hubs (Richards, 2011b), or a 'dispersed creative region' (Richards & Wilson, 2007).Networks can bring together actors who are located at great distances, but they can also link actors and/or resources which are spatially more proximate, as in the development of the *albergo diffuso*, for example. One of the differences between a network and a co-located cluster is that the former depends on active collaboration to ensure connection, whereas in clusters physical proximity is usually assumed to be sufficient to ensure interaction. In RRAs, knowledge tends not to be spatially concentrated, but rather spread across a wide area, placing the emphasis on the 'switcher' role to link remotely located actors together.

Some studies have dealt with these issues in relation to tourism. For example, Selada, Cunha and Tomaz (2011) report on findings from the URBACT "Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas" network. Looking at cases from Óbidos (Portugal) and Barnsley (UK), they conclude that the development of creative clusters in rural areas can be promoted by strong leadership, community spirit and high quality of life, which stimulates in-migration of creatives. However, with an increasing number of rural places adopting creative development strategies, they warn of the risk of policy transfer and emulation of the development of creative clusters. They argue "serial replication of this phenomenon can be avoided if creative strategies are anchored in historic precedents ('path dependency'), in the symbolic value of place and space and in cultural heritage." (p. 22).

In recent years studies have also emerged of the role of clustering and networking in the fields of cultural, creative and rural tourism. For example, Cerquetti (2020) analysed the impact of museum networks in the Marche Region of Italy. She found that little attention has been paid to network effectiveness. In the Marche region there is a critical financial situation and staff shortages, which have driven a search for greater effectiveness. A variety of models were implemented, including Local Museum Hubs and Thematic Museum Networks in cities, and Integrated Territorial Systems to link urban and rural areas. These build thematic networks based on local economic, artisanal, production and tourist activities, centred around cultural institutions and sites.

Scalabrini and Alves (2022) examined best practices in creative tourism, asking how these fitted with tourism clusters.   They review Creative Tourism Clusters, which they argue bring together stakeholders in a geographical area to develop local markets and increase stakeholder interaction to boost creative tourism. They cite several examples, including a Creative Tourism cluster in the Alqueva region in Portugal, which unites different actors in the political sphere, the knowledge domain (archaeology), tourism sectors and supporting activities. The stakeholders can include tourism organisations, local authorities, accommodation establishments, restaurants, attractions, transport operators and ancillary services. They draw a distinction between clusters, which require physical proximity, and networks, which do not. They argue that clusters are based on a place vision, whereas networks are united by business goals. However, this contrasts with studies of cultural networks, which are often based on voluntary organisations with non-business goals (e.g. Jarman, 2021).

Scalabrini and Alves (2022) identified many tourism clusters across Europe, but fewer cultural or creative tourism clusters. They analyse two tourism clusters located in Galicia and Serbia, as well as international networks such as the CTN. In Serbia, for example the Istar 21 cluster (www.istar21.rs/english) aims to identify the key elements of the tourism product, shaping regional offer of products, creating a common strategy for development and performance in the market and increasing competitiveness by adding value throughout the supply chain. The activities of the cluster include: Promotion of cooperation and development of tourism, market research, creating tourism products, training employees tourism promotion and advertising.

Summarising the best practice dimension, Scalabrini and Alves (2022) suggest that the aims and purposes of a Creative Tourism Cluster should be:

 (1) To represent, defend and disseminate common interests of members;

 (2) To identify the key elements of Creative Tourism;

 (3) To create a common strategy of marketing and information to each cluster;

 (4) To increase the competitiveness of the regions where the cluster is located;

 (5) To connect and exchange information and technologies;

 (6) To add a value chain to Creative Tourism.

This suggests that a Creative Tourism Cluster should incorporate both cooperation and synergies, and network and value chain aspects. To stimulate local collaboration clustering is important to harness spillover effects, whereas networking is important to capture resources, including knowledge and investment.

In their analysis, Cucari, Wankowicz and De Falco (2019) see new models emerging from clustering in rural areas. These include the albergo diffuso concept of dispersed accommodation (see below). They argue that networking can be seen as a new form of clustering, in which proximity is created through long-distance links rather than co-location.

In a study of remote area innovation in Norway, Leick, Gretzinger & Roddvik (2023) analyse the networking activities of rural entrepreneurs in the Lofoten Islands. For some entrepreneurs, the attraction of visitors and tourists to the region was a key resource which they continued to use during

their entrepreneurship. Hence, the entrepreneurs depended upon location-specific financial-economic and amenity-based inspirational resources. The study found that new ideas often came from part-time entrepreneurs involved in agriculture. For example, a part-time musician looking for new ways to make use of his farm and had the idea of arranging concerts. He met with another farmer looking to develop cultural products, and they developed the concept of 'Cultural Farms'. Leick et al. (2023) conclude that for networks to function, leadership is required, and network members have to be willing to share knowledge, information, and resources.

This sharing often led to new ideas through observations of other tourism firms. In particular, impressions and ideas gained while travelling or on study tours were of importance. This was not a case of pure copying, but rather external inputs to generate ideas, followed by development and implementation. External inputs are especially important as a knowledge source.

Leick et al. (2023) see networks as important firstly because they have clear economic advantages, and secondly because they provide friendship and fellowship. This creates a safety net if a business fails and access to like-minded people with whom to discuss ideas. Strong ties are therefore important for social support. Actors would not lose out financially by leaving the network, but they would lose discussion partners, friends, and sources of inspiration.

Clustering is also linked to the role of place by Zollet, Monsen, Chen and Barber (2024), who argue that place is increasingly recognized as central to understanding the entrepreneurial process. Rural areas are characterized by unique strengths and opportunities, which often depend on place embeddedness. In terms of research gaps, more work is needed on the challenges facing specific groups in RRAs, including women. Vukovic, Petrovic, Maiti and Vujko (2023) looked at female empowerment in Serbia and indicated that tourism can be tool for emancipation, particularly where business is traditionally dominated by men. In the tourism sector women have a chance to become economically more independent. Few other tourism studies specifically consider the position of women in rural or remote areas.

Ferreira Carvalho, Martins Da Costa, and Alves Pedro Ferreira (2023) analyse the reasons for "lifestyle entrepreneurs" to develop creative tourism. They find that entrepreneurs get a lot of pleasure from producing creative tourism experiences. Sharing these experiences with tourists and co-creatively developing skills is important. In Portugal an important role is also played by migrants returning from abroad. Santos (2023) found that migrants aged 29 to 39 having a house in their place of origin would like to return and invest in rural Portugal.

A study of international winter tourism entrepreneurs in northern Sweden by Carson, Carson and Eiermann (2018) analysed the role of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship. They   identify the migration, lifestyle, and business motivations of tourism entrepreneurs in a remote, low-amenity area in northern Sweden. Previous research has focussed on ski resorts, and other traditional 'winter' activities. They argue that winter experiences in remote areas centre on different values and activities that are currently not well understood.

Push factors for entrepreneurs to locate included escaping from civilisation, stress and the pressure to succeed in an increasingly competitive urban society, along with unemployment or dissatisfaction with working conditions. The northern winter was a recurring pull factor, confirming the crucial role of climate and weather conditions. The low-amenity north was deliberately chosen over more developed tourism destinations, which were seen as too crowded.

Most participants became self-employed after migration, meaning that entrepreneurial aspirations were not involved in the initial lifestyle migration decision.

"We started off working for [the hotel], but we had different shifts, so we never got to see each other. And those jobs were during winter, so then we had no time left for our dogs, which had been the main reason for coming here in the first place. This was not how I had planned my 'lifestyle move'".

"Dogsledding tours are a much better compromise in com-parison. We can just keep doing what we like doing anyway and charge for it."

Demand for alternative winter activities among international tourists was rising, but international markets were grossly under-served by local providers. Many migrants did not want to expand their businesses. A few operators stopped running day tours to avoid the constant tourist turnover, and focused on extended tours and musher training workshops, which they thought attracted tourists more likely to share their own lifestyle values. Some also refused to work with international tour operators who were seen as pushing larger groups, high-intensity tourism, and the 'wrong type of tourists'.

Another strategy was to expand the winter business to keep busy in the long and dark winter ("I need to have lots of tourists around during winter, otherwise it gets really lonely and depressing up here."

Tricarico (2024) examines the emergence of "innovative hubs that harness technological progress to redefine the dynamics of proximity in economic activities. Importantly, the contemporary discourse emphasizes the significance of relational and social proximity for fostering grassroots innovation."

3.2.5 Cultural and creative tourism – overall trends

Cultural and creative tourism are increasingly analysed in the tourism literature, with growing attention being paid to rural and remote areas. However, attention for rural cultural tourism remains much lower than for urban areas. Although there are signs in some RRA that problems associated with tourist pressure can also be found at some cultural sites, in general CCT helps to spread tourism flows in RRA. Creative tourism is also emerging as a potential alternative to traditional models of cultural tourism and provides a means of harnessing the potential of intangible resources. However, there is less research on creative than cultural tourism, particularly in RRA.

Rural destinations include a wide range of cultural resources, including both tangible and intangible heritage. However, rural tourism demand is highly dependent on accessibility, with areas close to major cities experiencing higher levels of tourism pressure. Although rural tourism supply benefits from lifestyle migration, there are still labour shortages which make tourism operations challenging. This is particularly true where the development of tourism experiences is based on contact between locals and tourists. Over time, however, some rural areas are being transformed into consumption and lifestyle spaces, in what Paniagua (2016) has termed the 'new rurality'.

In remote areas, the challenges noted for rural destinations are further exacerbated, particularly in terms of access and supply of labour. There is considerable potential for the development of CCTs, particularly where the cultural and creative industries can be effectively linked to the tourism sector. New types of CCT are also emerging in remote areas, such as the 'nature-based creative tourism' noted by Björn and Lüthje (2023).

The challenges of thinly spread CCT supply and demand in RRA has led to numerous efforts to spatially cluster resources and/or develop networks to link different locations. In many rural areas, innovation hubs developed to stimulate rural entrepreneurship can also function as tourism resources, helping to create markets for local crafts and other rural products. Such hubs can serve both the local community and tourists, acting as spaces of encounter. Many networks have been developed in CCT that can help to link cultural and creative resources, which are also discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.

3.3   Resourcing CCT in RRA

Developing CCT involves identifying suitable resources to link to tourism. This can be challenging, because utilisable cultural and heritage resources are not evenly spread in rural space, and they may be extremely scarce in some areas. This section of the report identifies some of the main types of cultural and heritage resources linked to CCT in RRA as identified in the CROCUS literature review. This

is important in terms of identifying the resources that could potentially be used in developing innovative business models for CCT in RRA, which is one of the main aims of the CROCUS Project.

3.3.1   Rural resources

Rural resources for CCT include intangible cultural resources (such as gastronomy, food, wine and olive oil), tangible resources such as buildings (e.g. churches, castles) and links to the Cultural and Creative Industries. One of the largest bodies of literature related to CCT in rural areas covers gastronomy, which underlines the role of the countryside as a supplier of food.

Although gastronomic tourism has long been a subject of study in rural areas (Hjalager & Richards, 2002), most research in the last two decades has concentrated on primary food products. These include wine and more recently olive oil, which have been the focus of much work on the Iberian Peninsula.

Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2020) examined innovative wine-based experiences in rural Catalunya and the innovation of "large wine vats walking visits". "The guide pays remarkable attention to the particularities, details and curiosities of the history of the large wine vats and the people who worked there", with "tasting near the wine vats, identifying where the vineyards were located in the past, is new, giving the visitor an innovative, rich and interesting perspective" (p. 250). Sustainable governance is key to success of the bagesterradevins.cat enterprise, which has links to local and regional government and the support of the local population of the territory. Leal, Sotomayor and Barton (2024) analyse the role of wine landscapes and culture as drivers of local and regional development, comparing Peruvian and Spanish cellars.

In a national survey, Martínez-Falcó, Marco-Lajara, Zaragoza-Sáez and Sánchez-García (2024) examined the effect of wine tourism on the sustainable performance of Spanish wineries. They found that tourism activities including guided tours, wine tastings and related experiences can help to diversify their sources of income. They argue that wine tourism can be a catalyst for growth and revitalization in local communities as well as having a positive impact on the environment.

In the Moravia region of the Czech Republic, Šťastná, Vaishar, Ryglová, Rašovská and Zámečník (2020) examine wine tourism as a subset of cultural tourism. They identify several major cultural tourism market segments: (1) nature and homeland values, (2) history, (3) architecture and urban planning, (4) folklore, ethnography and rural habits, (5), religious values, (6) gastronomy, (7) personalities and media, (8) technical works and monuments. They see cultural tourism as a big opportunity for the landlocked Czech Republic. However, there is a lack of infrastructure, marketing, information and human resources. The most attractive and most popular tourist areas are the mountain areas of the borderland, whereas cultivated lowland areas of Moravia and Bohemia are considered far less attractive. Cultural tourism can help to provide a more equal flow of tourism. Especially after Covid, domestic tourists have discovered the appeal of rural regions. However, there is a lack of human resources and a need to invest in higher quality infrastructure. The main obstacle is insufficient cooperation among local stakeholders, such as entrepreneurs, public administration, or individual government departments. A fundamental drawback is the lack of clear identification of cultural tourism as an economic sector or the cultural sphere.

Niavis, Belias and Tsiotas (2020) examine the promotion of wine tourism in the region of Central Macedonia in Greece. Wine tourism was first organized in 1993, when 15 winemakers were set up in a common scheme in the form of a non-profit-making urban society, called "Union of Wine Producers of the Vineyard of Macedonia". Many wineries have now been included in the "Wine Routes of Northern Greece" programme, attracting a significant number of visitors every year. They found four categories of visitors:

(a) Wine enthusiasts with a high level of education.

(b) Newly-educated, usually low-income students.

(c) Occasional visitors who are most interested in the region's gastronomy.

(d) Tourists visiting wineries and vineyards as tourist attractions.

This seems to suggest a continuum from creative to cultural tourism, and from more active to more passive consumption.

The wineries have been involved in the Wine Roads of Northern Greece, and the annual Thessaloniki International Wine Competition. There are constraints including bureaucracy and incomplete information, which have prevented the producers from achieving their original goals, and the wine experience generates low satisfaction levels.

Seniv, Dordevic and Dimitrovski (2013) looked at wine tourism in Serbia, identifying low quality as a barrier. Future research is needed to support the development of Serbia as a competitive and attractive wine tourism destination.

Luković, Kostić and Dajić Stevanović (2024) also analysed food tourism in Serbia, arguing that 'Valuing local and locals', 'Food for well-being', 'Getting back to basics' and 'Buying local' are among the key trends. Local food purchases increase sustainability and address the ethical, environmental and health needs of rural tourism consumers. Rural regions occupy about 85% of Serbia and the pandemic encouraged food tourism. Opportunities for local food tourism include autochthonous cereals (buckwheat, 'spelta'), vegetables (domestic sorts of onion, cabbage, pepper, tomato, etc.) and fruits that still exist in traditional Serbian homemade cuisine today. Consumers are interested in berries, wild fruits, mushrooms, organic vegetables and cereals. Females were more interested in ethnobotany and food-related activities. Serbia also has multicultural influences from neighbouring countries. But globalisation can damage local tradition and cuisine patterns are standardising, contributing to losing authenticity.

In Portugal, Teixeira and Ribeiro (2013) examined the lamprey and the partridge as a basis for food tourism, and diversification away from the main tourism hubs to rural areas. Participation in the '7 Wonders of Portuguese Gastronomy' contest gave publicity to lamprey and partridge, and the surrounding region as well. This led to commercialisation, such as canned 'Gourmet style' versions of pickled partridge. The effects of increased promotion have been different, as the lamprey "can be regarded as a textbook example of sustainable tourism management and preservation of local heritage" (p. 206) whereas tourism development related to partridge "proved harmful to the cultural and gastronomical heritage of the region (and) raised serious concerns as to the authenticity of food tourism representations" (p. 206). Portugal has much intangible heritage connected to food, because so much of its national identity is defined by food and food consumption.

Olive oil is increasing being framed as a food resource for the development of special interest tourism (Pulido-Fernández, Casado-Montilla & Carrillo-Hidalgo, 2019). They see rural tourism and cultural tourism as forms of general interest tourism, whereas olive oil is seen as a form of niche tourism, alongside creative tourism and gastronomic tourism. López-Guzmán, Cañero Morales, Moral Cuadra and Orgaz-Agüera (2016) made an exploratory study of olive tourism consumers, finding that 71.8% of Spanish tourists and 77.0% of foreign tourists surveyed would consider visiting an oil mill, interpretation centre or museum. The main trip motivation was getting to know the geographical area, but learning olive oil and eating and drinking the typical products of the area is also important.

Čehić, Mesić and Oplanić (2020) examine olive oil tourism in Croatia, which they see as a spontaneous development, related to a main element of the Mediterranean diet. They argue future research must address all parts of olive tourism market, especially to the olive tourism providers and the users (visitors) engaged in olive tourism.

Ramírez-García, Gago-García, Serrano-Cambronero, Babinger and Santander-Del-Amo (2023) examined the touristic exploitation of lavender fields, which they see as an articulation of a "Provençal

Mediterranean oneiric." They found a direct relationship between lavender tourism and rural tourism as tourist activities associated with lavender were almost always combined with other elements such as landscape viewpoints, interpretive routes, bird observatories or sport activities. In addition, explicit reference was made in all cases to cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible. In the rural areas lavender tourism has generated economic diversification, helping to rejuvenate the life cycle of these destinations. The challenge is striking a balance between profitability mechanisms and sustainability processes that are not solely dependent on tourism. The decision to cultivate or to maintain lavender crops will depend on market developments and production costs.

Latorre, Frutos, de-Magistris and Martinez-Peña (2021) segmented the market for "Mycotourism", or mushroom tourism. In Europe, there are events that attract national and international tourism, such as the Festival of Tartufo Bianco d´Alba (Italy), The Sarlat Truffle festival (France), The Gotland truffle festival (Sweden), The International Mycological Congress of Castilla y León: Soria Gastrono-mica (Spain), and Trufforum (Europe). The profile of mycological tourists in Castilla y León (Spain) shows that 52.7% travelled to the region specifically for mycotourism purposes while others did so for secondary (33.7%) or residual (13.7%) reasons. Almost a quarter of respondents reported having engaged in mushroom tourism over the last three years. Extrapolating this percentage to the whole region gives an estimate of 462,023 mycotourists in Castilla y León every year.

Mycotourists are motivated by personal growth, disconnection, and nostalgia, and two segments of thrill-seekers and leisure-seekers were found. The main segment of mycotourists is middle-aged, generally 36–60 years old. This corresponds with general rural tourist profiles and previous research on the mycotourist. Fusté-Forné (2019) approaches mushroom-gathering in peripheral areas from a practice perspective. He underlines the seasonal nature of the practice, driven by natural rhythms. The practice is bounded in time, but also supported by long-standing links between urban and rural areas – city dwellers reenact practices learned with previous generations in rural settings. The practice provides the basis for business models based on rural foods, events and restaurants.

Whiskey tourism is a specific Scottish rural tourism niche examined by Stoffelen and Vanneste (2016). In the Speyside region, whisky distilleries are of central importance to the regional economy   and to the tourism sector, providing a high-profile regional brand, high quality visitor centres and links with external markets. But regional inclusivity is not guaranteed, which is a "missed opportunity" to gain more from whisky tourism. There is great potential but the regional benefits are still limited. They argue more balance is required between endogeneity–exogeneity and embeddedness–disembeddedness. There is a need for institutional structures to facilitate regional integration of local interests and bridge these gaps.

The links between rural and urban areas also run to food consumption, which is now having a big impact on rural destinations through gastronomic tourism. Carolan (2022) highlights differences between urban and rural perspectives on food, with ''city foodies emphasising food miles as opposed to linkage with rural communities. One farmer commented: "most people either don't have a clue about what life's like out here in the country or they actively don't give a crap about what happens to us''– us being rural inhabitants……we think cities have forgotten farm families and rural communities'' (p. 118). Urban food policies are not seen as helping rural communities. The urban ethical consumer discourse shapes rural producer's sense of self, "making them feel like alienated partners in the broader project of producing good food."

3.3.2   Monuments and museums

As Richards (2001) noted, monuments and museums have long been the mainstay of cultural tourism supply in Europe. This is because there are many of these tangible heritage resources, but also because they tend to be open and accessible for visitors much of the time. There are fewer of these resources

in rural and remote areas in general, but even here such tangible heritage resources tend to account for the bulk of tourist visits.

Examples of important monuments in rural areas include: Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, which attracts 1.5 million visitors a year and Bran Castle, also known as "Dracula's Castle", which had 835,000 visitors in 2017. Many archaeological sites are also located in rural settings, such as the site of ancient Olympia in Greece, or the remains of the Roman city of Italica close to the small town of Santiponce in Spain (Castellanos-Verdugo, Caro-González, & Oviedo-García, 2010).

Visits to tangible heritage attractions in RRA can be increased where there are concentrations of such resources. For example, the Loire Valley in France is designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site (WHS), thanks to the presence of more than 300 chateaux along the river. Visitor surveys show that 63% of tourists mainly visited castles and heritage sites during their stay. One third of domestic tourists and 45% of international visitors booked tours taking in several such sites (Morice, Liu & Lin, 2020). But this research also shows that tourists generally prioritise major sites such as Chambord and Chenonceau, and this spatial concentration is still greater for international visitors. Relatively short stays in rural areas and visitor concentration on a limited number of 'must see' sites is a potential threat to tourism sustainability.

Gómez-Ullate, Rieutort, Kamara, Santos, Pirra, and Solís (2020) analyse the role of museums in rural areas of Greece, highlighting the museum network of the Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Bank. This network of rural museums aims to highlight traditional rural heritage and attracts around 330,000 visitors a year. Gómez-Ullate et al. (2020) note that most such networks are "elitist", being operated either by the state or larger networks. Local initiatives tend to focus on the creation of smaller museums, usually focussed ethnography and folk culture. There has been a development of "theme museums" in Greece, such as the Meteora Natural History Museum and Mushroom Museum, the Radio Museum of Lafkos, and the Brickworks Museum in Volos. In the UK, the Rural Museums Network has 117 member institutions. The French Federation of Agricultural and Rural Heritage Museums (AFMA) "aims to safeguard and promote rural heritage in all its aspects - traditional tools and agricultural machinery, rural architecture and landscape and intangible heritage". In spite of the widespread development of museum networks in rural areas, there are question marks regarding their effectiveness. Cerquetti (2020) reports on a museum network in the Marche Region of Italy, but found network development hampered by a shortage of professional skills. She proposes a multi-level governance approach, linking museums, the Region and the state and combining top-down and bottom-up methods as a potential solution.

In many countries ecomuseums and open-air museums acts as important rural attractions. The first open air museum, Skansen, opened in Sweden in 1891, and since then many similar institutions have been established to conserve rural heritage, both tangible and intangible. In Poland, there are 59 open-air museums, which are increasingly adapting their operations to attract more visitors and increase revenues (Pawlikowska-Piechotka, Łukasik, Ostrowska–Tryzno & Sawicka, 2015). In many museums this includes the development of catering operations which arguably help to popularize the food culture, the rural traditions of the region and increase museum attractiveness.

Modern rural museums also have an important cultural function in linking the countryside and rural life with cities, including combatting urban ignorance about rural life (Bridgen, 2009). Many museums also now exhibit art in rural settings, such as the Kröller-Müller Museum located in the Hoge Veluwe National Park in Otterlo in the Netherlands. The Kröller-Müller attracted 210,000 visitors in 2022.

Although many rural areas have substantial heritage resources and many isolated cultural attractions that have high levels of visitation, integrated approaches to these resources are rare. As Garau (2015) notes in a study of the Marmilla region in Sicily, attempts to develop a systematic approach to integrating attractions, archaeological sites, cultural festivals and museums have failed, because "local administrators have not managed to effectively organize a real 'team' that could assume responsibility for the formulation of a strategic plan for place-based tourism, using place-based logic to enrich the

local community's purely parochial visions." (p. 6424). This underlines the essential connections between place-based approaches to development and governance (see section 3.4).

It seems that a place-based approach to cultural and heritage resources is desirable in the case rural settlements, where museums and monuments are usually linked with other rural facilities. For example, in the Portuguese village of Janeiro de Cima there are "three official rural tourism units, a restaurant, a bar, a pub and the Weavers House (a museum, a tea room, and a shop, and a place of weaving activity and training for residents). Gastronomy and local products (arts, crafts, linen and agricultural products such as cherry, olive oil and chestnut) also enrich the tourist experience." (Carneiro, Lima & Silva, 2015, p. 1223). Such a place-based approach can arguably also be supported by integrating tourism and the cultural ad creative industries.

3.3.3   Links between tourism and the Cultural and Creative Industries

In addition to tangible cultural attractions such as museums and monuments (see Section 3.3.2), RRA are increasingly harnessing intangible culture and creativity as a stimulus for tourism development. This arguably leads to more links between tourism and the cultural and creative industries (CCI). Richards (2011) identified growing attention for creativity in the 1990s not only in cities, but also in rural areas. One example of this was the development of 'crafts tourism', as exemplified in the EUROTEX project undertaken in Finland, Greece and Portugal between 1996 and 1999 (Richards, 1999, 2005). This project identified the growing tourist interest in local vernacular culture, everyday life and the desire to become more involved through active creative learning experiences.

The link between tourism and the CCIs has also been examined more frequently thanks to national policy in China, promoting the integration of culture and tourism. Qi and You (2024) develop an econometric model to examine the impact of the integration of the culture industry and tourism on regional green development. They find that

(1) The integration of the culture industry and tourism significantly enhances regional green development.

(2) With the improvement in the regional green development level, the integration of the culture industry and tourism is playing a gradually stronger role in promoting regional green development.

(3) Further analysis of the mechanism reveals that the integration of the culture industry and tourism enhances regional green development by facilitating the upgrading of the tourism industrial structure.

(4) Environmental regulation policies reinforce the role of the integration of the culture industry and tourism in promoting regional green development.

The OECD also emphasises the growth of the creative economy as a driver of economic growth and a support for culture (OECD, 2022b). This has also produced greater links between tourism and culture and creativity and the cultural and creative industries (OECD 2009, 2014, 2022a). These links also strengthened during the Pandemic, when the tourism, cultural and creative sectors were particularly hard hit. Post pandemic, several EU countries have designated recovery funds towards creating cultural tourism routes that target rural and disadvantaged areas (European Commission,2024). Efforts to maximise synergies between the tourism and cultural and creative sectors continued with renewed discussion of creative tourism (OECD, 2023). The OECD recognised the potential for the creative industries to support tourism, for example through learning experiences and contemporary forms of creativity. Creative workers, businesses and organisations contribute to the image and feel of a place, making them more attractive to visit, live in, work in and invest in. This in turn creates a "snowballing effect", with a flourishing creative sector increasing further tourism. The OECD argues that effectively linking tourism and creative economy policy has numerous benefits:

- increasing tourism demand and/or changing tourist profiles by generating new and engaging tourist experiences and rising awareness of lesser-known locations

- generating higher value-added tourism, by supporting the preservation of local heritage
- stimulating innovation by adding creative impulses and new technology to tourism development and challenging the creative industries to find new ways of managing tourism and improving tourism business operations
- driving exports through products that link creative content, places and culture in order to increase general levels of interest in local creativity and stimulate tourist visitation
- knowledge and skill development as a result of increasing contacts between creative and tourism industry professionals, between producers and consumers, and between consumers and residents
- job creation through establishing places as nodes in creative networks, stimulating the formation of clusters of creative and tourism businesses

Cultural heritage and creative industry expertise cannot be easily replicated, and offers unique resources for place branding and the diversification of tourism destinations. Creative content can also be used as a vehicle for place promotion (e.g. through films, music).

Cultural tourism helps to preserve and promote traditional cultural practices and indigenous communities. It can help educate international visitors, but it can also be targeted towards domestic visitors to discover their roots. Cultural and creative businesses themselves can be a tourist attraction. For example, "know-how" tourism has been identified as a priority sector for France, offering new places to visit, promoting France's industrial and technical heritage, and its excellent know how and crafts. *Entreprise et Découverte* is the national association of company visits, which aims to promote and promote the company visit sector.

The cultural and creative sectors are driving tourism innovation. For example, Auf der Flucht (On the run) is a regional project from the Austrian-Swiss border area, where guests participate in an interactive theatre experience including a 1-day guided mountain hike.

The cultural and creative sectors can be harnessed to promote more sustainable tourism. For example, virtual replicas of megalithic monuments in Ireland make the protection of sites easier. Similarly, new forms of virtual experiences are being used to diversify the cultural tourism market by offering access to sites which cannot be experienced physically. Frey and Briviba (2021) suggest the creation of replicas of cultural sites as a means of dealing with 'overtourism'.

Paul Cloke (2007) underlines the development of creativity as practice in rural tourism. Wojan, Lambert, and McGranahan (2007) also traced the development of rural 'artistic havens' that often started out as artist colonies but are now becoming creative hubs, craft production centres and creative tourism destinations. Stolarick, Denstedt, Donald, and Spencer (2010) show how Prince Edward Country has become ''Canada's First Creative Rural Economy Founded by Pioneers, Artisans and Entrepreneurs'' (Prince Edward County, 2011). Creative tourism is being developed here as one strand in a creative class strategy that seems to have generated considerable cultural and economic benefits.

Salis (2023) describes the "where nature meets art project" in Ulassai, Italy. This combines the legacy of the artist Maria Lai and the creative potential of the region to link nature and landscape with identity and community. The aim of the project is to integrate cultural, landscape and traditional values with innovation, new technologies and the green economy. Due to depopulation, many buildings in the town are abandoned or in ruins, and the University of Cagliari has been running a series of architectural design and urban regeneration workshops to creatively respond to this challenge.

Music is also a creative sector being developed in many rural regions. McKerrell and Hornabrook (2022) examine the development of music tourism of Argyll and Bute, Scotland. The Highlands and Islands Enterprise organisation recognised the lack of data on the creative industries in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, where many small music businesses are not recorded. The lack of cross-sectoral collaboration in rural regions also results in an under-developed cultural tourism potential.

Working as a professional musician in many areas is very difficult: 'there certainly isn't enough work round about here to make a living from being a musician, but that's the case for everyone'. Some musicians do live on outlying islands, but transport problems make earning a musical livelihood challenging. Rural areas therefore lose talent in the creative industries to larger places. Festivals provide one business model that can support musical performances, but this requires collaboration within the creative sector as well as with other sectors.

Individuals working within organisations in the region act as 'hubs of information' (or 'switchers' in Castells' 2000 terminology), connecting the local and regional informal networks with potential clients outside the music community. This is also important with problems of internet access - digital connectivity is vital for those trying to stay and make a living in remote regions. Connecting with visitors can also be problematic. Visitors often ask for local tips and suggestions for live traditional music, which is usually available in pubs. Tour guides and tour operators take groups around, and play traditional music recordings in their tours.

Rural regions face the same problems everywhere: the challenges of broadband connectivity for business; large distances adding significant costs; social distance between small communities and a lack of infrastructure and accessible support. However, there are particular issues for the rural creative economy: "The disconnection from both dispersed regional geography and social distance means that very little coordinated action that might support improved collaboration or cost sharing takes place (and) that the rural context also necessitates creative practitioners take on a very wide range of skills and roles in order to sustain even a partial income." There is a close connection between traditional music and the heritage and sense of place in Argyll and Bute, suggesting that a more joined up approach to cultural tourism that acknowledges a rich musical and artistic heritage could bring more success.

Richards (2021) argues that crafts can invert the traditional logic of innovation, by:

- Emphasising quality over quantity
- Making better use of scarce materials and revaluing labour
- Increasing design intensity
- Retrofitting traditional solutions to contemporary problems
- Developing experiences that provide creative possibilities instead of consumption

Engaging the creativity of crafts producers in a future-oriented way means making links between local places, with their embedded creativity, and the global flows of people and resources, of which tourism is one part. In this sense, creative tourism can be seen as a 'glocal' strategy, in opposition to the serial reproduction stimulated by globalisation.

The EU Transition Pathway (European Commission, 2022a) also acknowledges the importance of the integration of cultural and tourism policies to improve the economic resilience of rural and remote regions and residents' wellbeing. Marasco, Lazzeri, Tartari, Uboldi and Sacco (2024) examine the "CCIs-tourism nexus" in the light of Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3), focussing the programming period 2021–2027 to examine the relationship of culture and creativity with tourism in innovation-led regional development agendas.

For instance, the Abruzzo region identified "Fashion/design" and "Sustainable mobility and tourism" within its specialisation strategy and technological innovation in cultural and creative industries is at the heart of the Italian region of Tuscany 2021–2027 RIS3. Campania identifies CCIs/ tourism as an 'innovation ecosystem', in which a "Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Creative industries" priority aims at integration between the productive domains of cultural heritage and tourism and the creative industries. In Sardinia and Sicily an experience-centred approach uses innovative solutions and technologies (AR, VR, MR, AI, wearable sensors, robotics) for increased attractiveness and sustainability. "Sustainable Creative Experiences" is one of the priority areas identified by the Dalarna län region (Sweden), integrating regional strengths in gaming and tourism. The region is one of the world leaders in game production and a fast-growing tourism destination. The strategy is to develop

Dalarnas as a destination for sustainable active, creative and cultural experiences for residents and visitors, blending tourism, sports, culture and creativity.

In many regions, the CCIs-tourism nexus promotes innovation for wellbeing and social cohesion (e.g., Azores, Kanta Häme, Southeast Romania, Tuscany, Sardinia) with a focus on:

- Health tourism, active aging and wellbeing;
- Development of cultural welfare for health and wellbeing;
- Accessible and inclusive services, including education and training, in tourism and heritage.

The RIS3 Azores 2022–2027 has four thematic agendas: 1. People first: a better demographic balance, greater inclusion, less inequality; 2. Digitalization, innovation and capabilities as drivers of development; 3. Climate transition and resource sustainability, 4. An externally competitive and internally cohesive country.

Marasco et al. (2024) see a general strengthening of the role of CCIs. For instance, the Campania region (IT) added a focus on the Creative industries within the specialisation area "Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Creative Industries," integrating the productive domain of cultural heritage and tourism with the creative industries. This area now encompasses the entire system of CCIs, from cultural heritage to companies producing artistic goods/services with a high creative content, to creative industries that take culture as an input for their core business.

Other regions introduced new priorities dedicated to CCIs:

- "Made in Italy, design and creativity" (Umbria, IT)
- "Products and services for culture and education." (Marche, IT)
- "Heritage, Cultural and Creative Industry and Services for Tourism" (Alentejo, PT)

More holistic policies include an integrated cultural system to drive digital and territorial growth and competitiveness in Catalunya, Spain, recognizing Cultural and Experience-based Industries as essential services alongside Tourism and Sports. Marasco et al (2024) note a shift towards the integration of tourism, culture and creativity, reflecting developments in China as well. However, there is a need to "articulate the paradigm shift found at the theoretical and policy level."

Duxbury (2021) reviews work on rural creative economies, identifying an initial wave of research from 2005 to 2010. This identified a 'cultural turn' in regional development, studies of 'the creative countryside' and the 'rural creative economy.' Work also emerged on creativity in peripheral areas, including events as attractions for visitors to rural and remote areas. However, the neo-liberal focus of much of this work also attracted criticism, with some asking if culture-led redevelopment was relevant for rural areas, and others questioning the wisdom of adopting urban theories in rural places.

The discussion about the use of external perspectives such as the creative class has led to more attention being paid to endogenous rural development. Herslund (2012) identified two types of new businesses in the Danish countryside established by the 'rural creative class': 'city-businesses' oriented towards the city market and 'local business' oriented towards customers in their local area. Initially 'city businesses' were able to establish knowledge-based, city-oriented businesses in in the creative industries from the countryside. 'Local businesses', on the other hand, offered health, culture/tourism and retail sales services, and struggled with the limited clientele and local networks in the rural milieu.

My product was not exceptional enough for to attract city people, but it was too strange for the local market. This is a small place where everybody in business knows each other. It takes a lot of effort to become one of them ...

The respondents fit the 'creative class' with backgrounds in creative and knowledge sectors in media and business services. They have high skills, extensive city networks and they are in search of the 'rural idyll'. They are attracted by the rural area as a place to live, with nature, scenery and low home prices, and for the young families, a 'local community'.

'Reach' in the sense of bridging physical distance cannot be achieved simply through digital means but depends on 'distributed networks'. Incomers do not contribute to rural development by reviving the community they live in. Rather, they extend the networks for other rural businesses. Such 'regional lifestyle businesses' create their own employment directly and also extend the networks of other local businesses and public institutions. The regional lifestyle businesses add 'organisational energy' to the regional area by coordinating, mobilising, fundraising and setting up networks.

Cawley, Gaffey and Gillmor (2002) also emphasise the important of the 'reach' of rural marketing and branding programmes. In Ireland, the Sligo CTC and Sligo Chamber of Commerce established the Marketing Sligo Forum, which had adopted a by-line based on a quotation from W.B.Yeats, "Sligo, land of heart's desire". They see the utilisation of natural, cultural, economic and social resources, coupled with local organization, as a means for small-scale rural producers to survive and retain control. The Marketing Sligo Forum used networking at both local and extra-local levels as a form of business development. Local networking distributed business between members. Group marketing was of particular importance for small accommodation businesses as a means of gaining economies of scale.

However, external assistance is necessary to support 'glocalization' in developing tourism areas. This was possible because business owners had relatively high levels of education and business experience and included immigrant entrepreneurs. Glocalization may be particularly appropriate in the rural tourism sector because of its dependence on a combination of local resources with an international market.

Rodrigues, Oliveira and Daniel (2024) argue that the rural creative class is embracing a 'new rurality', linked to the following issues:

1. Escape from urban bustle

2. Open space to promote experimentation

3. Emerging creative communities

4. Access to technology

5. Authenticity

Rural areas are becoming emerging centres of creativity, driving economic development, creating jobs and revitalising communities. Rural areas are becoming a magnet for the creative class, as a refuge, and as an environment that nurtures imagination and innovation. Rural areas have social capital of historical knowledge, local culture, a sense of community, and circularity of natural resources.

But Verdini (2021) argues that the creative economy in rural areas is overlooked. Previous studies have suggested the need for people-centred approaches on development, strategically rethinking local resources, and pursuing local participation, but most studies have a narrow focus, particularly on tourism. To achieve more sustainable development, issues of accessibility and connectivity must be addressed. Digital connectivity has unleashed development potential in the case of some Italian villages, but it is doubtful if such initiatives can be easily scaled up.

Others have taken a more take a more critical stance on the relationship between the CCIs and tourism. Larsen and Graezer Bideau (2024) argue that initiatives such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Network support 'officialised' creative spaces for artists, performers, designers and innovators, but can also standardise and commodify practices of creativity, smoothing over contradictions, alternative views and contestation. They also see digital technologies as further blurring the boundaries between the material and immaterial, and production of "detached, beautified and commodified places, objects and heritage practices ready for wider circulation and consumption" while "Contested heritage is annulled and less emblematic sites neglected or simply devalorised." They question the celebration of the heritage–creativity nexus as a panacea for heritage-making.

An empirical approach to the relationship between creative development and tourism is taken by Gómez-Vega, Boal and Alonso-Villa (2024). They analyse indicators related to cultural supply and participation, and talent. They find that creative spaces and talent contribute to tourism development but have no effect of 'Technology and innovation'. More creative environments, in terms of talent, diversity, cultural and creative activity and cultural and creative industry, increase tourism impacts. However, the strongest relationship is found in highly populated regions, rather than rural areas.

All in all we can conclude that there are increasing synergies being identified between tourism and the creative industries, as tourism providers seek high quality content and the creative industries look for new ways of valorising their work. There is a growing body of work on these growing links, although it remains small in comparison with the wider range of CCT research. There has been relatively little work in RRA to date, largely because the creative industries are mainly seen as connected to urban areas. But a number of key policy documents, particularly from the OECD, have begun to underline the potential of the creative industries in CCT, which is stimulating more research interest.

3.3.4   CCT business models in RRAs

The development of CCT in RRA requires the creation of appropriate business models to enable local communities and businesses to capture value from tourism activities. This section of the report analyses the most common business models encountered in the CROCUS literature review. These include a general review of the types of business models found in Finland, as well as a specific focus on accommodation business models and cultural routes.

Accommodation business models in RRA

Several rural tourism models centring on accommodation services were found in the literature, many of which are related to cultural heritage.

For example, Petrić, Mandić and Mikulić (2025) analyse the growth of 'cultural tourism villages' in Dalmatia in Croatia. They found different models of cultural tourism villages, including authentic rural villages, larger villages for 'culturally immersed tourists' and artificial villages lacking permanent residents. They underline the need to maintain a balance between heritage preservation and sustainable development, ensuring the conservation of cultural and natural resources on which attractiveness depends.

The 'tourist farm' model was examined by Dubois, Cawley and Schmitz (2017) in France, where these are promoted as a form of 'agritourism'. Visitors initially expect contact with animals and involvement in farm tasks, but this gives way a focus on natural surroundings, relaxation in a tranquil environment and a welcoming atmosphere. Two tourist segments were found: tourists who prioritise a rural environment incorporating farm animals, agriculture and a natural setting; those who prioritise a farm holiday as an opportunity for savouring farm and regional products; and a third group who seek farm accommodation in an area that provides access to tourist sites, cities and provides a swimming pool. Farmers responded to these expectations by modifying their farming activities, which poses a threat to their authenticity. Visitors had little knowledge of agriculture, and many expected involvement in farm tasks, which is not possible because of liability concerns.

In Austria, Katelieva and Muhar (2022) examine farm holidays, which have been offered since 1991 by the Farm Holidays Association through the brand *Urlaub am Bauernhof* (Holiday on the Farm). They have 113,800 bed spaces, accounting for nearly one-ninth of the accommodation capacity in Austria and employing 23,000 people. Katelieva and Muhar (2022) identify a number of activities offered in villages that could be linked to creative tourism, including:

(1) The 'Poppy Village' of Armschlag, created around the local knowledge about cultivating and using poppy, where visitors can take guided tours and cooking workshops.

(2) In Retzerland winegrowers have created a tourism product based on sharing their knowledge. Visitors can 'rent' part of the vineyards, participate in all phases of winegrowing and winemaking, and produce their own wine.

(3) Traditional resin extraction in the Wiener Neustadt region, where local knowledge and the practice of Pecherei are recognised as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage. Some traditional producers are now offering guided tours and demonstrations.

(4) Knowledge about medical herbs.

In the Poppy Village cooking workshops offer visitors the chance to actively participate: "in the cooking classes people are really excited, we press poppy with the poppy seed mill and show everything, they engage and work for hours".

However, not all activities are suitable for creative tourism. Resin extraction does not offer much experience. Although there is knowledge transfer by practitioners, they lack tourism and cultural interpretation knowledge. Showing the uses of resin in workshops and combining it with other handicrafts can engage visitors more. The attitude of local producers also sets limitations: 'No you can't learn it that fast, it's an art.'

In Scandinavia, second homes provide an important element of rural and remote accommodation supply. Sievänen, Pouta and Neuvonen (2007) argue that second homes provide a connection to rural life and activities include hunting, fishing, and harvesting wild and home-grown products. They offer "something to do'' and express individual creativity. Almost half (45%) of the Finnish population has regular access to a recreational home, and 57% of Finns spent an average of 31 days at one during the year. Second homes are also important in many other areas. For example, in the Czech Republic Vágner and Fialová (2011) link second homes with the concept of residential tourism, which is more prevalent in referring to tourism flows to southern Europe (Muller, 2020). Second home users stay many nights more than other types of tourists, use owned, rented or time-shared properties in the place chosen for spending their time off, and they come to enjoy an existing lifestyle.

One of the most studied accommodation models is the Albergo Diffuso (AD), which according to Bakan et al. appeared in the late 1970s in the Italian region of Carniola as a means of reconstructing earthquake-stricken settlements and halting emigration. But it took off in 1995 when the first AD hotel opened in Nuoro, Sardinia (Morena et al. 2017, 451).

Droli (2019) identifies three issues in the AD literature: neolocal tourism, community-based tourism and the sustainability of cultural tourism. Neolocal tourism is a reaction to the progressive modernisation of rural areas, or resistance to the homogenisation of place and culture. Community-based tourism reflects the need to involve the local population in providing AD services and experiences. Sustainability issues are not yet sufficiently recognised, but by enhancing resources including built heritage, landscape, eno-gastronomy and craft ADs can promote sustainable development, particularly in terms of the social dimension.

Such facilities should be "managed and owned by the community, for the community" particularly because the tourism sector has not been effective in spreading benefits. So there is a need to develop models that address the structural disadvantages of the rural, but which also provide benefits beyond the normal operation of the tourism industry, such as addressing low density, linking to the community, supporting livelihoods and sustainability.

Interactions between AD management and the local community are important for success. This should include individuals and businesses, but also capabilities non-profit organizations. These interactions enable increased differentiation of tourist services without increasing costs, adding competitiveness for existing firms and attracting new ones.

Other studies examine the obstacles to distributed hospitality in the territory, including:

- the need for adequate regulatory support

- the need for the appropriate management of entrepreneurial opportunities
- the economic and organizational diseconomies to be overcome
- the need to reinvent and preserve the built heritage
- the role of public-private partnerships
- the social implications and community impacts on the community

The words "diffuso" – suggesting a horizontal structure different from that of traditional hotels (Barbi 2007) – and "albergo" (hotel), indicating that visitors will find normal hotel services, became the basis for the key features of the AD as an original hospitality model. Although the AD concept is difficult to define, it can be seen as a model based on the love for a place and its nature, history and culture. This stimulates a desire to renovate abandoned buildings, with specialisation in a number of directions, including gastronomy, arts, sporting activities and wellness.

Paniccia and Leoni (2019) provide a definition of AD as: "a sustainable and innovative form of hotel that originates in enhancing historical and cultural real estate heritage, characterized by original structures, places (rural areas or small urban centres) and persons involved (both residents and tourists) in the production-distribution process and with experiential authenticity." The place-based nature of the product is important in connecting small firms and entrepreneurs with destination structures and institutions.

AD innovation occurs as an incremental process through the selection of useful adaptations, most of which can be viewed as social innovation based on new social behaviours and practical skills, with customer behaviour being a crucial aspect for success. The incremental approach to innovation stimulates a co-evolution of products and demand, in which a holistic view of the tourist experience is important to create a link with residents, and social responsibility becomes an important guiding principle.

"Our guests, in particular the Americans, love us because they live a unique and emotional experience. They come into contact with the local community and they discover the culture, dialect and traditions, especially related to food and wine."

Residents and artisans interact with guests through creative tourism activities, such as cooking and craft classes.

Bakan, Tubić and Jaković (2021) analyse the role of ADs in wineries in Croatia. They found that most respondents were unfamiliar with the AD concept or the opportunities. Scattered hotels differ from traditional hotels because they have: unified management of accommodation facilities concentrated near the centre of a small town or village with an authentic spirit, traditional production, agriculture and/or crafts; local residents provide the services to facilities that are up to 200 meters apart; and integrated quality management is applied.

Croatian legislation states that AD must be

1) located in predominantly old, traditional, historical, rural-urban structures and buildings, decorated and equipped in the traditional way;

2) a functional unit in the area of one settlement consisting of three or more widespread and functionally connected buildings, integrated into the local environment and way of life;

3) accommodation units can be: rooms, hotel suites, family rooms, studio apartments and suites.

These features appeal to 'new tourists' seeking unique experiences and immersion in the life of the local community. Empirical research indicated that the biggest limiting factors are:

- slow and inadequate administrative service
- lack of educational programs at the local and state level
- lack of marketing activities at the local and state level
- non-incentive conditions for small business

- unfavourable loans and high interest rates
- lack of information about incentive programs and poor flow of information.

All of the wineries expected help from local government and/or the Tourist board, which can take many forms: education on marketing (work on social networks, independent advertising, etc.), applying for funding, creating innovative and creative tourism products and services; upgrading communal and tourist infrastructure, start-up funding, financing and co-financing and marketing and communications with domestic and foreign tourism market.

In Portugal, State-led programmes have renovated buildings for tourism in rural areas, such as the Villages of Saudade in Minho, the Villages of Shale in the central region, the Water Villages in Alentejo, and the Historic Villages of Portugal (Silva, 2012). Arguably such programmes have a low impact on tourism employment, because of the small scale and family-run nature of the businesses. The tourism sector employs about 11% of village populations, directly and indirectly.

Local tourist offices recorded a steady growth in tourism, although numbers remain small. This is arguably a failure, because it has not supported the development of "quality tourism". Most tourists visit for a short time, looking and taking photos. As one resident of Castelo Rodrigo remarked: "The initiators of the programme and the local mayors came here looking for oil, but we only have stones. They said that it would be the beginning of a new era for the village, an era in which tourism would generate meaningful income growth and job opportunities for the village population, but this never happened, except for the five ladies working at the tourist office". Tourism entrepreneurs have different views, however:

"My partner and I created a tour company two years ago and set up the head office in Castelo Novo – one of the conditions for funding was that it be established in a Historic Village. So far, it has been a success. We are bringing in tourists from all over the world (Americans, Canadians, French and British) to walk and cycle in the region, in the Historic Villages" [Male, 30-35, tourist entrepreneur].

Silva notes that "In most villages, the programme attracted newcomers, of predominantly urban origin, looking for tourism businesses and, especially, second homes. Unfortunately, this influx came to hinder the social reproduction of the villages' populations because it has raised the price of buildings to the extent that local people can no longer afford to buy houses and the few newly married couples look elsewhere to buy their first home." Residents are proud of their renovated historic village, acknowledging that renovation has boosted tourism, providing important expenditure. But many residents feel that their lives and livelihoods have not improved in a meaningful way.

Challenges include: the high investment required to create a tourism business; low return on investment; limited number of entrepreneurs; little training in tourism and marketing strategies of entrepreneurs; the small scale of the industry; and increased intra-rural competition. Tourism can diversify income sources, mitigate outmigration, but it cannot solve the problems of rural areas, and is not always an appropriate development tool. Adding culture and creativity is important to ensure there is more than tourism consumption, but also developing the productive lives of residents.

Silva (2014) and Sila and Leal (2015) examined a programme for the 'monumental' rural villages of Portugal implemented between 1995 and 2006. Residents of the village of Sortelha were divided over the benefits of heritage creation and tourism. Built heritage site conservation and image, place identity, pride and awareness of heritage and the revitalisation of crafts are seen positively by villagers. However, these effects are offset against littering, loss of privacy, restrictions on new housing construction and the limited contribution of tourism to economic sustainability. Only 15% of residents benefits from tourism revenues, which creates envy and competition. Residents also perceive an increase in property values or prices, which most of them regard as positive.

Another accommodation model which is important in Portugal is the development of 'manor houses', or historic homes, and pousadas (state-run historic properties) for tourist accommodation. Silva and Prista (2016) reported that pousadas accounted for more than 9 million overnights between 1987 and

2013. The pousadas and other forms of rural accommodation provide links to agricultural landscapes and architecture reflecting a rural idyll. "The authenticity of the tourism experience in rural Portugal is either explicitly or implicitly based on its association with the past." The pousadas and manor houses are "furnished and decorated with antiques and exquisite objects obtained through family inheritances or purchased at antique shops. These include crystal tableware and silverware, tapestries, paintings, coats of arms, family portraits, and eighteenth-century Portuguese furniture". Guests at manor houses and rural accommodation units "pursue a pastoral idyll consisting of a landscape created by artisanal agriculture and architecture, mainly vernacular; that is, a pastoral idyll that resembles Bell's (2006) 'farmscapes'".

In Croatia, Demonja and Gredičak (2015) examine the role of "rural resorts" - ethno-eco-villages or albergo diffuso - defined as a horizontal hotel located in the historic centre of a place/site. These can be the entire place (village) or more dislocated accommodation units (rooms, houses) that are organised as a hotel with a central reception and other services. These often have a common management structure. They identify difference types of resorts, including those focused on mountain activities, wellness, crafts, wine and music.

Our review indicates that there are many different accommodation business models currently operating in the CROCUS study areas. However, we also have to be aware of some of the shortcomings of many business model studies. Most significantly, the focus of most business model analysis on specific organisational value chains tends to ignore the place-based nature of the tourism experience, the need for governance mechanisms to co-ordinate the different aspects of the experience and the fact that most business model analysis ignores the effect of competition.

Cultural Routes

Cultural routes are particularly important business models for CCT in RRA, because they link tangible and intangible resources together, also across borders. Within Europe, one of the flagship cultural tourism policies is the CoE's Cultural Routes programme. A cultural route is 'a cultural project aimed at the development and promotion of an itinerary or network based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon of a transnational importance that manifests common European values' (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012, p83). The CoE cultural route certification has existed since 1987 and there were 47 certified routes across Europe by 2023. To be gain certification, a route must be related to a theme that is representative of European values and common to at least three European countries. It must also be the subject of scientific research, enhance European memory, history and heritage, and contribute to the interpretation of Europe's diversity. Cultural routes must support cultural and educational exchanges for young people, develop exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. They must also develop tourist products and services aimed at different groups (https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/certification).

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) established the International Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC), which published the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes in 2008. This document defines cultural routes as:

"Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality which must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time, have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage and have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence."

The CoE definition of cultural routes, which is the most relevant in relation to cultural tourism in the European context, includes not only historical communication routes but also newly established

tourism routes. CoE Cultural Route accreditation opens the possibility for funding from the EU. In 2021, for example, the Cultural Routes received a total of 10.3 million euros from the EU to support project initiatives.

Durosoy (2014) notes that there is not a clear framework for cultural route planning or management although there are several guidelines published by international organisations, such as ICOMOS. Durosoy proposes a three-stage model, which starts with 'understanding the place' in a holistic perspective, followed by 'assessing the place' through a SWOT analysis, and then 'making decisions for the future of the place' which involves proposing objectives, the significance of place, making a statement of significance, identifying the theme of the project, setting general principles, making preliminary decisions and generating general scenarios. Lin et al (2024) identify the following tools for the development of cultural tourism routes: establishing route committees or associations, integral tourism management and route planning, constructing infrastructure facilities along the routes, community participation, establishing an official digital platform, holding cultural events, commercialisation an offering itinerary planning and travel programmes. Lopez and Pérez (2021) use the example of the Portuguese Way of St James to emphasise participatory management strategies to promote new forms of cultural tourism and heritage education.

The literature on cultural routes and policy covers various themes. On the one hand the establishment of such routes can be seen as a policy tool that contributes to the development of cultural tourism generally. On the other hand, cultural routes are seen as a policy tool that contributes to various other social and economic policy goals. Khovanova-Rubicondo (2012), for example, reports on a study of the impact of cultural routes on tourism SME's and argues that such routes 'are capable of not only improving economic conditions of remote destinations through income generation for local communities, but also of contributing directly to local communities' competitiveness, new employment creation, and social well-being of their citizens.' (ibid, p 88). Fafouti et al (2023, p 35) similarly highlight the potential benefits of cultural routes which can 'serve as a powerful tool for sustainable development, aiding in the protection of the local environment, managing tourism activities and promoting economic growth responsibly'.

Similar claims are made for cultural tourism more generally. Ottaviani et al (2024, p 11) for example claim that cultural tourism can serve as transformative force in rural and inaccessible areas, concluding that "this form of tourism can stimulate economic growth, empower local communities and contribute to the sustainable development of areas that might otherwise remain economically marginalized or isolated". However, there is limited empirical evidence for this. Hortelano Mínguez and Fernández Sangrador (2022) show that the number of pilgrims on the Camino rose from 145,877 in 2009 to 347,578 in 2019.

A recent review by Pedrosa et al. (2022) shows that most common studies of cultural routes cover the food and drink thematic group, particularly wine and olive oil, which also matches the current review. In terms of culture, many transnational history and pilgrimage routes are related to international cooperation projects, such as the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (COE) programme. Pederosa et al. (2022) argue that the concept of tourism routes has expanded from the narrow idea of a link between two points to a network of stakeholders working together to achieve common goals. Part of this development can be explained by the growing formalisation of the COE network, stimulated by EU funding.

Rodríguez-Vázquez, Castellanos-García and Martínez-Fernández (2023) analysed tourism flows to areas on the Camino de Santiago in Spain and found that   cultural tourism is more important in inland areas crossed by the Camino than in coastal areas. They suggest that the absence of beach tourism stimulates tourists to consume more cultural tourism. However, the Camino itself does not seem to be linked to any increase in cultural tourism demand. On the contrary: "those who follow the French Way of St. James would rather pursue other types of interests (scenic, spiritual, etc.) than those of a cultural nature."

The cultural theming of routes was examined by Santamarina and Vizcaíno (2021) in the case of the Valencia Iberian Route in Spain. The aim is to diversify the tourism offer beyond the sun and sand product. They found that some towns have benefitted strongly from cultural, rural, sports, or wine tourism related the route, with La Bastida increasing visitor numbers from 8,562 in 2000 to 14,822 in 2018. They particularly highlight the importance of wine tourism routes, which they argue is supported by the 'heritagization' of wine culture. They identify an effect of 'heritage stratification', in which different heritage layers overlap in a single place (culture, landscape, enology, and so on). Some of these elements can act as a tourist attraction, whereas others simply support the overriding narratives. The growing importance of culture of places along the route is highlighted by successful opposition to a large landfill project, based on the cultural and winemaking value of the area.

Otero, Timothy, Galí and Vidal-Casellas (2023 analysed the role of the Camí de Ronda pathway in Spain as a protector of the cultural landscape. They argue that such routes should be managed holistically and collaboratively and focus on the unique features of the route. Although the Costa Brava is perceived as a sun, sea and sand destination, there is year-round demand from 'local tourists', particularly from nearby Barcelona. Researching how these visitors relate to their surrounding landscape resources would help to increase our understanding of demand for such routes.

Partalidou and Tilkeridou (2023) analyse the contribution of a wine route to local development and the creation of shared benefits. They cite the case of the Union of Winemakers of the Macedonian Vineyards who organized a wine route funded under the EU LEADER programme. They found that progress was hampered by problems of access, high unemployment, outmigration, lack of human capital, strategic vision and seasonality. Although many stakeholders saw collaboration as important, there was a lack of progress towards a common wine tourist product. Many stakeholders had no idea what a wine route involved, and there were problems with free riders. Partalidou and Tilkeridou (2023) attributed non-participation in the route to human capital issues such as lack of skilled staff, cultural and social capital (trust, elitism, culture of cooperation), variations in business size and production quality, lack of vision, and physical isolation of the rural area. They note differential understandings of collaboration, and that networking is primarily seen as a means of promotion rather than achieving common goals in route development.

In the rural area of Aitoloakarnania, in Western Greece, Moropoulou, Lampropoulos and Vythoulka (2021) analyse the role of cultural routes in development efforts. They argue it is important for routes to identify relevant target groups for such areas lacking infrastructure and accessibility. Even when there are significant heritage sites, these often do not accommodate large numbers of visitors, due to lack of investment. However, the use of technology and innovation can be arguably easier in cultural routes in underdeveloped areas. This is important because smart innovations can help address the lack of financial resources. Public-Private Partnerships have been important for Aitoloakarnania, providing support for investments to encourage sustainable development and protect cultural heritage.

There is a significant concentration of entrepreneurial activities in coastal and insular regions. The lack of cultural tourism entrepreneurship observed in the Greek mainland is due to low investment returns, linked to regulatory costs and the domination of coastal tourism. But McKerrell and Hornabrook (2022) suggest that the development of trails can stimulate business clusters and encourage interaction and participation between creatives, the local community and businesses to ensure that an appropriate and welcoming trail is developed for visitors.

Travelling along a route inevitably involves some form of transport, even it is only two legs. Somoza Medina, Lois González, and Somoza Medina (2023) argue that walking is as a 'cultural act', which also benefits the environment. Walking is becoming more popular as health concerns rise. In Ribeira Sacra in Spain, promotion of walking trails was viewed as important to supporting sustainability as well as promoting tourism. With this approach, the number of tourist nights rose significantly between 2012 and 2019.

Also in Spain, López-Guzmán, Sanchez Canizares and García (2009) analysed the case of a wine route in the Córdoba province of Andalusia. The Montilla-Moriles route, which includes the city of Cordoba, was founded in 2001 through between partnership between the municipality of Montilla and the ACEVIN network. Most wineries in the area are open to visitors, and almost all offer wine-tastings. The route is very close to major beach tourism destinations which makes it a potentially interesting add-on for beach holidays and a diversification for the mass tourism market. Most visitors come from the local region (27.5%), or from elsewhere in Spain (45%). The main obstacles to the development of cultural tourism are seen as lack of government coordination and planning. There is a need for more training to improve human resources, and more marketing activity in collaboration with tourism suppliers.

Trono and Castronuovo (2021) analyse the partnerships involved in the Southern Via Francigena route in Italy. There are strong synergies between public bodies, cultural associations and local residents, which promotes sustainable mobility and increases awareness among visitors and local residents of local culture. But due to the changing form of the partnerships, there was limited direct interaction with institutions and local stakeholders. The number of visitors continues to increase, with requests for a "pilgrim's passport" growing by over 65% a year from 2015 to 2020, in spite of the Covid pandemic. Increased demand also stimulated more supply of tourism products, such as the "Cammino dell'anima" in the Benevento area (Campania). However, the route faces technical, organisational and managerial challenges and marketing and communication issues

Calderón Puerta, Arcila Garrido and López Sánchez (2018) conducted a national analysis of cultural routes listed in the websites of the Autonomous Communities in Spain. They found few statistics on visitor numbers or income generation. They argue the lack of monitoring of the cultural routes limits knowledge of their role in the market and their impact on users and local communities, making improvements and innovations difficult. The development of new routes is not usually supported by feasibility studies, and there is relatively little promotion via websites or social media.

In Sweden Jacobsen and Antonson (2017) identified a lack of research on tourist motivations for visiting officially designated tourist routes. In the case of the Höga kusten route in Sweden, 55% of survey respondents reported an intention to return during the summer season within the next three years. More than half of those intending to return lived near the route.

The "Footsteps of St. Paul" route in rural areas of Greece was examined by Lampada, Tzedopoulos, Kamara and Ferla (2019). They argue that the concept of using an organized itinerary connecting different localities for pilgrimage is not familiar in Greece. But the route is popular with foreign pilgrims taking cruises and coach tours linked to the travels of St. Paul in Greece. This route has also been featured in regional and local action plans and other tourism development measures. They see the route as offering a high density of natural and cultural attractions, which provide a range of potential experiences. Municipal authorities are also increasingly positive about opportunities for alternative forms of tourism.

CCT business models in remote areas

The Nordic north is a good example of CCT business models in remote areas. In the general management literature, business models are understood as: "(1) business models as attributes of real firms, (2) business models as cognitive/linguistic schemas, and (3) business models as formal conceptual representations of how a business functions" (Massa et al., 2017, p. 73). Similar categories have been used in tourism business model contexts (see Mihalič et al., 2012; Reinhold et al., 2019 extensive review on studies). In practice, the modes often overlap with each other, as demonstrated by the following analysis from Finland.

Based on the materials published in Finnish, the first type of model is evident on studies focusing on the cultural and heritage assets (attributes) and products linked with those attributes. These assets for businesses involving cultural and creative tourism (CCT) products include locally produced food (materials) and gastronomy (Lüthje & Saari, 2018), Sami culture (Mällinen & Sarkki, 2014; Saarinen,

2006), mythology (Kalevala) (Pulkkinen et al., 2023), heritage items (e.g. local furniture, buildings) and historical events and people (Ilmonen, 2016), and natural and cultural landscapes (Sivonen, 2013; Uusitalo et al., 2006).

The second type of CCT tourism business models referring to development, change, decision making, and social action included elements, such as cultural values and sustainability (Grahn, 2021; Veijola, 2023), construction of different meanings attached to the local food (Lüthje & Saari, 2018), local level collaboration in creative tourism (Kaunisharju, 2009) and networks in decision-making (Sivonen, 2013; Seppälä, 2012). Finally, the third type of business models was limited in the materials. There were very few publications focusing on how to represent i.e. portrait business models, and how to develop new innovative business ideas. Few references included the cultural development of local network model to lead a way forward (Mäkiniemi & Äikäs, 2021), problematizing and guiding tourism planning to new directions (Saarinen, 2006; Veijola, 2023) and promote culturally sustainable tourism regarding rural and indigenous people (Lüthje & Saari, 2018).

In conclusion, this review of tangible and intangible heritage resources from the CROCUS Database has underlined the diversity of potential resources for CCT development in Europe. In terms of the development of experiences that can benefit RRA, particularly in cross-border collaboration, the development of cultural routes seems a particularly appropriate option, as suggested by the Council of Europe (2020). However, the effectiveness of cultural routes in stimulating local development, and particularly in stimulating tourists to travel along the route itself, is still unproven. What seems to be crucial for the development of cultural routes is effective governance structures that can deal with diverse communities and cross-border working.

3.4   Governance issues

Cultural routes and other cross-border initiatives are particularly likely to require sound governance structures to ensure their effectiveness. As one of the main aims of the CROCUS Project is to develop cross-border living labs for creating sustainable CCT business models, the analysis of the challenges and opportunities of cross-border CCT is important.

As top-down systems of government are supplemented by more bottom-up networks of governance, more attention is being paid to the role of governance in supporting cultural and creative development and shaping tourism development. Attempts to provide more inclusive approaches to governance issues in tourism are marked by the emergence of concepts such as 'cultural governance' (King, Richards & Chu, 2023) and 'place-based governance' (Feuer, Van Assche, Hernik, Czesak & Różycka-Czas 2021).

Earlier studies of rural tourism tended to focus on leadership rather than governance. For example, Pröbstl-Haider, Melzer and Jiricka (2014) identified a lack of destination leadership in rural areas, including a lack of critical analysis of the actors and their profile. They argued for communities to be more involved in spatial planning processes and the debate on development.

In the specific context of rural creative tourism, Duxbury et al. (2021) suggest that 'open coordination' can be particularly useful for destinations in countries with limited resources. "By working together, stakeholders can pool their resources, goals, and expertise to develop creative destinations." Open coordination could be an interesting possibility, but no concrete definition is provided, or an indication of how it could work. Could open coordination function as a governance model for networked organisations/diffuse clusters? If so, what is needed to make this function?

Demonja and Gredičak (2015) note that Croatia has an ineffective tourist destinations governance model, which includes many actors, but without clear rights and responsibilities. Tourist boards are the only legally regulated bodies.

Pilving, Kull, Suškevics and Viira (2022) analysed the role of regional tourism networks in supporting rural-urban tourism collaboration in Estonia. They argue that different types of networks need different governance, and that collaboration has to take account of the challenges of rural areas. Rural entrepreneurs are in a disadvantaged position compared to their resource-rich urban counterparts, and lack the critical mass needed to function effectively. Rural areas have a shortage of attractive jobs, limited services and leisure opportunities and weak transport links. Visit Pärnu is the main public sector organisation (DMO) in the Pärnu region, and it has adopted a strategy to foster tourism development and collaboration. This was supported by the region's LEADER action groups, within which dominant enterprises tend to shape local tourism policy and act as switchers between urban and rural networks.

Figure 3.18: Collaborative ties between different regional networks (Pilving et al., 2022)
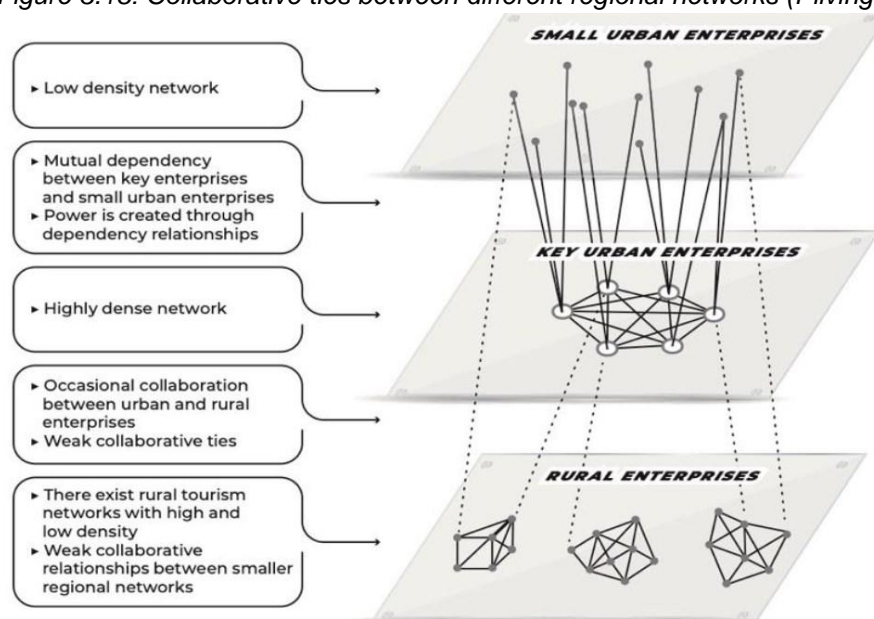
In rural areas, there are several local collaborative networks of tourism entrepreneurs. Some of them are associated with LEADER local action groups, but regional rural tourism networks are mostly self-organised. Ties between spatially distant entrepreneurs supported by trust, friendship, resource and information sharing, but this is not enough to achieve the higher density needed for network growth and connection. The fact that most visitors only come for the day means they do not often provide links between different attractions, inhibiting collaboration.

Collaborative networking between the rural entrepreneurs involves combining services (e.g., active holiday, accommodation and catering), and socialising (e.g., workshops that focus on learning and community tourism development, study trips and festivals).

Rural-urban networking is complex, and in the Pärnu region, ties between the existing networks in urban and rural tourism space are weak. Regional tourism networking suffers because the DMO does not involve and address the interests of different types of tourism entrepreneurs.

Reasons for a lack of networks of tourism entrepreneurs include:

- The difficulty of finding, clear aims at regional level despite shared interests.
- Key enterprises have power in the region, but they have a low influence on dense rural networks.
- There is no principal agent in the region to activate rural and urban entrepreneurs in setting the goals of the regional tourism strategy.

- The current tourism organisational structure is not adequate to build a rural-urban network, and a new kind of institutional development is required.

Organisational barriers also create misunderstanding between urban and rural entrepreneurs, and lack of socialisation and links between different regional networks make finding a common ground a challenging task. When tourism entrepreneurs are strongly connected with the community in a tourist region, they also have stronger collaborative ties with other stakeholders in that community. However, this 'bonding capital' does not necessarily create 'bridging' ties with other communities in the region. There are limited connections between rural and urban enterprises, but also between local networks of rural tourism enterprises.

Pilving, Kull, Suškevics and Viira (2022) make two recommendations for developing rural and urban networks. First, the DMO must involve entrepreneurs with different levels of salience in tourist destination management. This helps to create ties between entrepreneurs and networks that operate in rural and urban tourism space. Second, the regional tourism networking needs to use the strength of the weak ties which are often found in low-density networks.

Malisiova and Kostopoulou (2023) examined whether cultural associations can promote creative tourism in peripheral areas of Greece. They found that cultural associations can provide a strong basis for the development of creative tourism. The Komotini Municipality has 19 cultural associations with various creative activities (arts, performing arts, crafts, design, local gastronomy, dialect, spirituality, creative routes/walks, and sports) in settlements with less than 5000 inhabitants. Most of the staff were female volunteers. Elderly locals who are not part of the "creative class" play an important role in passing local knowledge, history, customs, and traditions to future generations. Therefore, the connection between tourists and cultural associations is not made through tourism institutions, but through personal contacts generated by cultural association members. In terms of tourism related activities, cultural routes were found to provide the broadest networking possibilities.

In rural areas of Montenegro, clusters are being developed to tackle problems with scarce resources and inaccessibility (Moric, 2013). However, several management and marketing issues are identified regarding cluster implementation. Information technologies and intelligent systems can be useful for cost-effective marketing implementation, but most Montenegrin cultural trails are still in the first phase of cluster development, with limited cooperative behaviour.

Moric (2013) argues that the potential of intangible cultural heritage represents the most innovative segment of cultural tourism thanks to its 'live', rich, creative, and dynamic character, and enable locals to become intermediaries in processes of cultural exchange and communication. It also provides potential for cross-border collaboration, as illustrated by the HERTOUR project "Strengthening heritage tourism and community development in Austria and Montenegro". But it is not sufficiently valorized due to lack of knowledge, skills, and technological opportunities.

Melón, Fandos-Herrera and Sarasa (2021) explore the activation of governance processes in the Cultural Project of Community Development of La Aldea in Spain. Their analysis of the local ecomuseum shows a lack of connection with the business community. This is largely due to the lack of strategic vision (and commercial orientation) of the project, but also the voluntary nature of the organisation, which has tried to transmit ethnographic values related to tradition, forming a living ensemble of museum representations. However, the local embedding of the museum is a strength, because this supports:

- a high emotional load, with the spoken word predominating. This also encourages visitors to talk and touch the artifacts.
- staff links to local places, providing a distinctive experience
- the altruistic nature of the museum organisation.

In Viscri, Romania, Iorio and Corsale (2014) explore the role of networking in community-based tourism. They examined why locals decide to host tourists in their homes and their attitudes towards

the experience. In Romania, rural tourism structures are organized in several national associations, such as ANTREC (National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism), Rexteaua Verde (Green Network) and FRDM (Romanian Federation for Mountain Development), which mostly list guesthouses but have sometimes had a more active role, especially within European Union development projects.

Families that hosted tourists were able to improve their economic position, and others living in the area, particularly those working in the guesthouse, could also benefit from the presence of tourists.

''I mostly serve food coming from my own farm – fruits, vegetables, chickens, eggs. There is no tourist who does not buy a least a pot of my home-made jam. Sometimes tourists want to help me collect plums or apples, they like doing that. Then I make a little discount for them''

Families are also proud to see tourists enjoying the meals prepared in their house, giving them confidence and satisfaction in their skills, the additional income and increased social status. This is particularly important for ethnic minorities.

However, ANTREC does not provide active marketing support, as it basically lists the guest-houses in its website without any promotional actions. One local commented ''ANTREC does nothing for us, but it wants our money''. The autonomous management of rural tourism by individual families is particularly positive in terms of flexibility and self-sufficiency, but it also indicates weak co-operation and networking. Limited attention is paid by local and national administrations to rural tourism, and greater coordination among all government levels is urgently needed in order to provide training programmes and integrated territorial marketing.

The importance of leadership in rural tourism development is underlined by Haven-Tang and Jones (2012), while Haven-Tang and Sedgley (2014) emphasise the need for partnership. Effective use of local resources requires collaboration, and this is particularly important in rural areas which lack iconic attractions and where the businesses involved are generally small-scale and fragmented.

Schuhbauer and Hausmann (2022) argue that cooperation, especially between providers from different stages of the value chain, is the most important success factor in cultural tourism. The challenges of cultural tourism in rural areas in general include a lack of personnel and financial resources. Successful strategic cooperation requires the development of clear rules, common goals and responsibilities and concrete added value for each of the actors should be visible. Good communication and the exchange of resources and competences are also needed. Previous studies of digital applications for the development of cooperation have tended to be too general or have focussed mainly data and information exchange. German-language studies indicate many rural cultural tourism providers are hesitant in using digital applications for tourism marketing, and strategic cooperation is limited.

They provide a case study of the project "The destination as a stage - How does cultural tourism make rural regions successful?" in the Zugspitze region of Germany. A Web app has enabled guests in the region to solve puzzles and tasks, collect points, unlock rewards and to engage in storytelling. The spatial distance of the cultural institutions from each other was mentioned as a challenge. Important decisions are mostly made at the political level and not by cultural tourism stakeholders in the region who are involved in the implementation.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed highlighted the long-term financing as greatest challenge in rural areas for the implementation of the Web app. The cultural institutions also do not know if and how their guests use digital applications, which may not be relevant for many visitors. There is also little evaluation of collaboration activities. Many cultural institutions only have their own needs and interests in mind and operate within a limited radius, which also limits the successful implementation of the Web app.

In the Baltic States, Garanti, Berjozkina and Zvaigzne (2023) looked at the adoption of smart tools for 'historical tourism', including   interactive exhibits, mobile apps, digital maps, and augmented reality.

They found that these methods can be used to make heritage assets more approachable, interesting, and educational for tourists, increasing tourism revenue and promoting sustainable development.

Jones, Van Assche and Parkins (2021) argue that different perspectives on place-based economies and development share a link with governance. Proactively developing networks can increase the potential of crafts for community development. Networks of producers can intersect with wider innovation networks to connect craft industries to external resources. Local governance networks can also support craft networks by connecting producers to strategic planning and decision-making. Stimulating craft development requires proactive integration of craft activities with a diverse range of partners and sources of support.

Local governance must do more than simply enable what a few local stakeholders want. "It must also consider which contributions can have bigger effects based on existing features of governance, local development priorities and the materiality of place and its natural elements." Craft revivals require community strategy, and this can be promoted by linking governance networks, innovation networks and craft networks.

There is "an overlapping group of discourses attempting to restore value creation in rural areas, with different academics, entrepreneurs, and communities emphasising different elements: learning, identity, materiality, tradition, place, organisation, quality and difference" (Jones et al., 2021). Craft can serve as a bridging concept between place and creative activity and enable exploration of different versions of local revitalisation. This also makes it clear that there is a link between social practices and governance.

3.4.1 Policy Frameworks for Cultural Tourism

In addition to the wider governance context of CCT in RRA, it is also important to consider the specific public policies relating to CCT. There is very little literature that deals specifically with policies for cultural tourism in rural and remote areas, although cultural and creative tourism are of course discussed as part of studies of the literature on sustainable tourist destination development (Santos et al., 2022; García-García et al., 2023). The main focus in this section is on supra-national heritage management and cultural routes, while funding mechanisms are dealt with in other sections: EU Rural Development Policies in Sustainable Tourism in RRAs (Section 3.4.1) and INTERREG in Cross-border collaboration (Section 3.4.6).

Cultural tourism and Heritage Management

At an international level, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supports the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage that is considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. There are currently 933 cultural world heritage properties. The UNESCO World Heritage mission has the following objectives:

- Encourage countries to sign the World Heritage Convention
- Encourage the nomination of sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List
- Encourage the establishment of management plans and reporting systems on the state of conservation of world heritage sites
- Providing technical assistance and professional training
- Providing emergency assistance for World Heritage sites in immediate danger
- Support public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation
- Encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage
- Encourage international cooperation in the conservation of the world's cultural and natural heritage

Many World Heritage sites are dependent on tourism and before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism at World Heritage sites was growing significantly. UNESCO (nd) notes that "this rapid growth came at an increasingly high price to both local communities and their cultural and natural heritage, which were straining under the pressure of the exponential growth of visitor numbers, often concentrated in fragile sections of these sites".

As Mura (2011, p10) points out in her book chapter on the Angkor World Heritage site in Cambodia "Because of the need for tourism revenue for conservation...required to tackle with negative consequences followed from excessive tourism development, the nexus of conservation and tourism development has become a highly important issue for heritage managers". The tension between preserving cultural heritage and making it accessible to tourists is one of the most prominent themes in the literature on cultural tourism policy. Frey and Brivba (2021) discuss the issue of 'cultural overtourism'. They note the harmful consequences of excessive cultural tourism including on the local population, tourists, and the environment. They propose 'Revived Originals' (cultural sites that are identically reproduced in a more convenient location) as a policy to address the problems of overtourism.

There is also increasing concern about the impact of climate change on cultural heritage sites (Li et al., 2022; ICOMOS, 2019; Potts, 2021). Markham et al. (2016) set out a range of policies recommendations to address the threat of climate change to world heritage sites, including vulnerability assessment and monitoring, increased resources for management and adaptation, disaster response and preparedness strategies.

EU cultural tourism policy

In the European Union (EU), cultural and creative tourism is an integral part of policies related to the preservation of cultural heritage and is explicitly mentioned in the *New European Agenda for Culture* (European Commission, 2018) and *European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage* (European Commission, 2019).

In the Faro convention, adopted by Council of Europe (CoE) in 2005, cultural heritage is defined as 'a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and an expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time'. As Hristov (2017) notes, cultural heritage, and thus cultural tourism, is the focus of a variety of cooperative cultural policies at the EU level. These include the European Capital of Culture programme, Structural Investment Funds, Horizon Europe, and LEADER.

Tourism plays a significant role in EU Cohesion Policies and Biagi, Brandano & Ortega-Argiles (2021) state that almost half of EU regions include tourism in their smart specialisation strategies. There is a literature on smart specialisation policies and tourism (Bellini et al, 2017; Benner, 2017; Weidenfeld, 2018) but not specifically on cultural tourism. Brandano and Crociata (2023) evaluate the impact of EU funds on tourism and the cultural sector in Italy concluding that they have "a positive association with the cultural sector but have been ineffective in most regions as for the tourism sector" (ibid, p 774) due an unbalanced approach focusing on 'traditional' cultural sites.

Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe have also provided funding for projects that support the development of cultural and creative tourism. Ottaviani et al. (2024), for example, discuss the achievements of the TExTOUR project which aimed to produce guidelines for sustainable tourism cultural tourism development. They conclude that inclusive, participation-led methodologies are crucial. There is also an Interreg Europe Project on Cultural and Creative Industries contribution to Cultural and Creative Tourism in Europe, which has a similar focus on CCT to CROCUS, but situated mainly in urban areas. The partners include local authorities in Italy, Hungary, Latvia, Ireland, Scotland, Cyprus, Poland, Greece and Belgium (https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/cultcreate/).

3.4.2 Sustainability

Four features of sustainability are crucial from the perspective of CROCUS, namely

- key features that set RRAs apart from urban tourism settings;
- prominent forms of tourism in RRAs;
- challenges for development of sustainable tourism in RRAs;
- characteristics of attempts to promote sustainable tourism in RRAs.

The literature in this area is dominated by a large number of individual case studies and relatively few comparative studies (Koster, 2019; Halkier & James, 2022), and this text therefore primarily draw on a number of recently published review articles (Ammirato et al., 2020; Baixinho et al., 2020; Ferreira et al., 2023; García-García et al., 2023, Joshi et al., 2024; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Rosalina et al., 2021; Valderrama & Polanco, 2022) plus key contributions to the debate.

Rural and remote, not urban

Rural areas are generally defined in opposition to urban areas, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In EU statistics rural areas are defined by low population density and distance from urban centres (EUROSTAT, 2018), and although integrated in national and global flows of goods and people (Hall et al., 2009), they are often associated with less economic diversity and also – for better or worse – small close-knit communities (Saarinen, 2007). Importantly, the intersection of social, economic and geographic developments results in a great variety of ruralities (Koster, 2019; Fullerton & Brouder, 2019; Adriansen & Madsen, 2017), and therefore knowledge of the specific features and development path of a particular rural area will be paramount when considering initiatives to stimulate e.g. sustainable tourism development (Fullerton & Brouder, 2019).

Rural tourism diversity

Rural tourism involves a diverse range of activities based on the cultural and natural resources available in non-urban areas. Much has been written on the longstanding practices of agritourism and farm holidays as forms of accommodation that supplement campsites and B&B-type establishments by offering close to or involvement in agricultural activities (Ammirato et al., 2020), and similarly an extensive literature exists on spas and wellness that are often located away from the hustle and bustle of urban life (Drobnjaković et al., 2022; Dryglas & Smith, 2023). While hiking holidays have a long-standing association with the countryside, increasingly other forms of activity-driven tourism (cycling, mountain-biking, climbing) have gained increasing importance as ways of enjoying the natural environment and the cultural landscape away from built-up areas (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Palang et al., 2017). Cultural resources, tangible as well as intangible can have important roles as drivers or secondary reasons for visitors to some rural areas (Ottaviani, 2024; Richards, 2021c), and the diversity of rural tourism has gradually grown through the introduction of various types of experience economy activities – e.g. creative and/or spiritual retreats – that combine developing manual or mental skills with immersion in a rural setting (Richards, 2020). In short, rural tourism is clearly comprising a wide range of individual and collective experiences for tourist - and an associated diversity of business models, ranging from more or less demanding outdoor activities organised by tourists or local micro-firms, via small-scale farm diversifying into accommodation and agritourism, to large-scale professional providers of wellness services.

Great sustainable hopes, quiet desperation

Tourism has often been burdened with expectations of being a measure of last-resort development for rural regions in which primary-sector activities are declining (Saarinen, 2007; Hall et al., 2009; Halkier, 2010; Bohlin et al., 2016; Šťastná et al., 2020). At the same time, rural tourism has often been equated with sustainable forms tourism (Hall et al., 2009; García-García et al., 2023; Ferreira et al., 2023), not just in environmental but also in socio-cultural terms (Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Corral-Gonzales et al., 2023), presumably due to being associated with small-scale place-based operations and a predominance of nature-based activities (Santos et al., 2022; Valderrama & Polanco, 2022).

However, the academic literature has demonstrated that the challenges for developing sustainable tourism in RRAs are considerable, not just in terms of limited resources in rural areas with regard to entrepreneurial vision, access to funding and limited marketing efforts, but also with regard to competing for uncertain demand with similar destinations at home and abroad (Ammirato et al., 2020; Šťastná et al., 2020). Moreover, the review article by London and colleagues (2024) found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that "tourism management and development can enhance sustainable development, but tourism's impact is mixed. Positive impacts include increased local economic development, cultural tourism, and protected areas. Negative impacts include increased environmental pollution, negative impact on indigenous culture, and a complex relationship with social capital." It will therefore be important to maintain a clear distinction between the imagined futures and the actual development trends regarding sustainable forms of rural tourism.

Promoting sustainable development of rural tourist destinations

Promoting sustainable tourism in rural destinations has gradually climbed up the political agenda over several decades (Hall, 2022; García-García et al., 2023), and many academic observers hoped that the pandemic might become a turning point that would take tourism development in a much more sustainable direction (Ateljevic, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020; Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020, Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Although tourism in the short term would seem to have largely 'bounced back' to its previous global growth trajectory rather than 'bounced forward' to a greener and more equitable future (UNWTO, 2024; cf. Zhu & Dolnicar, 2021), sustainable tourism discourses and initiatives clearly remain on the political agenda (Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Corral-Gonzales et al., 2023; García-García et al., 2023; London et al., 2024). Also, the well-published controversies around overtourism in tourist hot-spots, primarily urban but also rural, in recent years (Capocchi et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2020; Butler, 2020) have helped to further the general recognition and relative importance of sustainability in tourism development.

Strategies for sustainable tourism development would, however, seem to be implemented largely in ways similar to those of destination development policies in general, namely through reliance on external sources of funding for individual initiatives (Hristov & Zehrer, 2019; Rosalina et al., 2021). Whether from national or European sources (e.g. in rural areas the LEADER programme), organising long-term development activities on the basis of short-term external funding is a challenging approach, especially when demand for sustainable forms of tourism is uncertain and the governance structures around development projects can be weak in terms of integrating private sector actors and local communities in the design and implementation of activities (Leslie, 2010; McAreavey & McDonagh, 201; Šťastná et al., 2020; Halkier & James, 2022; Mu & Aimar, 2022; Corral-Gonzales et al., 2023).

All in all, this means that coordination, internally in the destination as well as externally, also becomes a key task of rural DMOs, alongside innovation and promotion. These challenges are similar to those of DMOs in general (Jørgensen, 2016; Reinhold et al., 2019; Volgger et al., 2021), but they have to be executed in a context where human and other resources are thinner on the ground.

Sustainability issues in the CROCUS database

Sustainability has become a renewed research focus in rural and remote regions as the effects of climate change become more obvious and policy initiatives such as the European Green Deal and national policies (e.g. Raspor, Kleindienst, Peršič, Mastilo, Borojević & Miletić, 2020) stimulate debate on achieving sustainable development. The policy aspects of sustainability are considered by in Section 3.4.1.

Peñalosa and Castaldi (2024) identify a "green window of opportunity" for peripheral regions in this debate. Peripheral regions often lag behind in innovation performance, but these are precisely the areas targeted by European Union support. They find the integration of regions into environmental projects is substantially better in Northern and Southern European regions compared to Western Europe and in capital regions with high population density. Eastern European regions tend to be least

integrated into environmental projects indicating challenges in participation in EU programmes. They identify a need for research to examine absolute and relative levels of geographical peripherality separately, to uncover distinct patterns. There is a link between CCIs and green growth.

Bernabé and Hernández (2016) examine tourism in Sierra de Albarracín in Spain (5000 inhabitants). This settlement has gone through three phases of heritage renovation: urgent restoration, socio-professional dynamism and cultural dynamism, supported by government and EU programmes such as LEADER. The area includes examples of prehistoric cave art, designated as World Heritage by UNESCO. Tourism has grown in line with heritage restoration, although visits remain highly seasonal, and domestic visitors predominate. Bernabé and Hernández (2016) note continuing difficulties of coordination between stakeholders, which limits further growth and reduces the sustainability of the tourism sector.

Panzer-Krause (2020) examines the attitudes of tourists towards sustainability at the Giant's Causeway, the most visited tourist attraction in Northern Ireland. She notes that overtourism at rural tourism hotspots is a neglected field of research. Surveys indicated that cruise ship tourists and coach trip tourists tend to visit the Giant's Causeway as a 'must see' sight in Northern Ireland, whereas individual visitors are more interested in the geology or are stimulated by recommendations from friends. The latter group are also more aware of sustainability issues. Green admission discounts apply for tourists who arrive by public transport, bicycle or on foot but this type of discount is hardly used. Length of stay is short and "the tourists' spending patterns reflect their ability and preparedness to support local enterprises such as crafters and thus influence the structure of the rural economy. Even though meals, drinks and souvenirs provide a possibility to sense rurality, here there is no indication of a genuine engagement." (p. 6). Panzer-Krause (2020) suggests that a sustainability strategy "may include easy and bundled access to information, guidance and booking services with regard to nearby rural tourism providers such as accommodation, gastronomy, transport and tourism activities both in the planning stage of their visit and on-site." (p. 6)

In Italy, Cerisola and Panzera (2024) argue that cultural and heritage tourism is often associated with sustainability, particularly at low levels. However, the relationship weakens when congestion-related issues come into play. Future research could be devoted to considering cultural tourism in its interaction with intangible heritage assets and to how this affects local development.

According to Lerario (2022) the EU defines sustainable cultural tourism as the integrated management of heritage and tourist activities together with local communities, creating social, environmental and economic benefits for all actors, to achieve sustainable conservation and tourist management of tangible and intangible heritage. However, there has been little research on sustainable cultural tourism in rural areas, with a few exceptions. Turnock's (2002) study of Maramures in Romania describes an area with a rich cultural landscape and tangible and intangible heritage, where cultural tourism has considerable local potential. The area had developments from ANTREC and 'Opération Villages Roumains' (OVR), who competed to some extent in providing rural accommodation. This tends to undermine the economic sustainability of an area that otherwise is very attractive as a tranquil rural destination.

The role of the SDGs in cultural tourism development is considered by Ottaviani, De Luca and Åberg (2024) in presenting evidence from the TExTOUR EU project. Actions developed during the project included heritage related routes, traditional culinary schools, a vademecum for citizens and tourists, creative workshops for immigrants, artistic events, Protected Designation of Origin for local products, digitalization of heritage resources, and artistic residencies. They note a lack of transnational research in terms of cultural tourism sustainability. However, they conclude that "Cultural tourism can be a valuable actor in promoting and enabling sustainable development in more rural and inaccessible areas."

3.4.3   Place and placemaking in Rural and Remote Areas

The need to link sectors and locations highlights the vital role of place, which is where culture, creativity and tourism meet. This is linked to a wider debate on place-based approaches to local and regional development. Pugalis and Bentley (2014, p. 561) note that "The role of place and the notion that 'place matters' is a vital dimension of policy debates across a broad range of fields in all corners of the world." The fundamental idea that place matters is not only increasingly central to much development and regional studies thinking, but it seems particularly pertinent in the case of the CROCUS Project, where the valorization of local cultural resources is central. However, much of the debate about place-based development in the EU focusses on the leading role of urban economies in achieving 'smart specialisation' (McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2014).

Place-based thinking can help to integrate policy fields that often remain disconnected, such as economic development and place branding policy initiatives that in some places, at least, have tended to remain isolated (Pugalis & Bentley, 2014, p. 567). However, we should also be aware that place-based development approaches are not without criticism. As McCann (2023) notes, place-based approaches are not a panacea, and may suffer from problems of parochialism. A place-based approach therefore arguably needs multi-level governance arrangements in which the local, regional and national levels all learn from each other.

The idea of using place as a focus for economic, social and cultural development is gaining ground with the "territorial turn" in sustainable development generally (Zemite & Kunda, 2023) and with the spatial or locational 'turn' in the study of cultural and creative tourism (Richards, 2020). A growing number of studies now examine the role of place in attracting tourists and embedding creativity (Richards, 2011a).

To date, however, there has been relatively little attention paid to broader frameworks for integrating the needs of all destination stakeholders, such as placemaking (Richards, 2020). Very few mentions were made of placemaking in the sources reviewed. A broader search of the placemaking literature revealed four papers that are relevant to the current research. Gyimóthy (2018) considered the use of Swiss locations as a backdrop for Bollywood films. Richards (2020) produced a general review of the links between creative tourism and placemaking, including rural examples. In the remote context of Greenland, Cooper (2020) analysed the role of a local cultural centre in giving meaning to place for locals and tourists. In a review of rural creativity, Duxbury (2021) touches on placemaking, and Fusté-Forné (2019) analyses mycotourism through a placemaking perspective. This rather limited body of work provides some indications of placemaking issues, but above all points to many gaps in our knowledge, particularly in relation to RRAs. In comparison with heritage and cultural tourism studies in urban areas, there is relatively little comparison (direct or otherwise) of the views and experiences of rural residents and visitors, or other stakeholder groups. Residents are seen as part of the rural economy, and tourism is viewed as one segment of this. Visitors are conceptualised as a form of demand for a certain location and/or product.

There is some evidence of a relatively recent shift from sectoral approaches to cultural and creative tourism towards more holistic views, often incorporating concepts related to place and placemaking (Richards, 2020). This is linked to growing critique of narrow approaches, and the increasing role of 'place' as a focus for economic and cultural development in general, and tourism in particular.

In terms of creativity, Florida's later work (2017) shifted from a focus on the 'creative class' towards quality of place as a driver of economic growth. Quality of place refers to the unique set of characteristics that define a place and make it attractive; or 'Territorial Assets'. These include three essential dimensions: resources including both built and natural elements, the backdrop these provide for the pursuit of creativity; the people and the diversity that supports creativity; and activities - the vibrancy of street life, café culture, arts, music, and outdoor activities.

Quality of place can be linked to other concepts such as 'culturescapes' (Saar and Palang, 2009). The culturescape is viewed as the site of meaning-making or "the web of collectively shared practices of

meaning-formation that embraces the product: distribution, consumption and preservation of collectively shared meanings." This concept links to the placemaking model developed by Richards (2020), in which the activation of resources through meaning-making has a central role.

However, there is some debate about the role that place assumes in tourism, and the effects that tourism development can have on the attributes of place. In the context of placemaking, the discourse seems to be relatively positive, with the idea being that tourism supports processes that make places, including different forms of development and improvements in the quality of life. On the other hand, the role of tourism in some places can also be summarised as a process of 'placetaking', with residents ceding the use of amenities to visitors, and the economy becoming 'touristifed.' In the context of the rural, place can also link to fairly conservative notions of territoriality, and the promotion of cohesion over bridging.

Today, the need for 'collaborative proximity ecosystems' (Tricaro, 2024) becomes even more crucial, as innovation is increasingly driven by relational networks and social connections. As supply changes, so does the nature of demand, so that: "Proximity to sophisticated consumers becomes a potential source of competitive advantage". In cities this is not a problem, but in peripheral areas this challenge is mainly addressed through tourism, which brings consumers to the product.

Tricarico (2024) suggests the need to move to a "proximity-oriented" urban economy rather than the previous "mobility-oriented economy". This will be a challenge in rural areas, however, where thinly spread populations retain the need for mobility, both physical and virtual. This suggests the need to combine both clustering, which emphasises co-location, with networking, which promotes distributed collaboration.

Panzera (2022) provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between cultural heritage and territorial identity examining the role of tangible cultural heritage in shaping place identities and the generation of economic effects. Panzera distinguishes between the value and impact of cultural heritage. Value captures what sites mean to people, while impact relates to their real influence on the economy and society. Values can affect impacts which in turn produce a reciprocal increase in values, as increased heritage impact will produce a higher valuation of heritage. According to Panzera, this triadic relationship between cultural heritage, tourism and economic dynamics has never previously been simultaneously considered. Panzera borrows from Capello and Perucca's (2017), linkage of "Sense of place" and macro-economic impact and includes perspectives on heritage and local prosperity (Carisola & Panzera, 2024) to link creativity, innovation and economy, enabling a move from tangible to intangible heritage assets. The basic argument is that place attachment facilitates interactions among actors from different sectors with a common interest in the effectiveness of local economic systems and, therefore, a propensity to engage in, alliances, partnerships and collaborations. These play a crucial role in the economy, (and) a common identity provides a common purpose – the need to stick together not just for cohesion, but also to create bridging capital to generate externalities.

Panzera identifies four typologies of identity from the interaction of localism and cosmopolitanism.

- Individualistic localism characterized by the absence of solidarity and the exclusively local feeling of sameness;
- Parochial localism indicating the presence of solidarity and a local feeling of sameness;
- Place-less cosmopolitanism linked to an absence of solidarity and local and supra-local feelings of sameness;
- Inclusive cosmopolitanism linking the presence of solidarity and a local and supra-local feeling of sameness.

Areas with higher population density and a higher share of population with foreign citizenship have a more place-less cosmopolitan identity. Greater accessibility and innovation are linked with inclusive cosmopolitanism. Low population density is linked with parochial and individualistic localism.

Using this framework, Panzera argues that more innovative analyses of the links between cultural heritage and economic effects are possible. However, this analysis is largely limited to the role of tangible heritage (for which more empirical data are available to facilitate testing). Panzera operationalises the concept of territorial capital as the set of all resources —material and immaterial; private, public and collective; cognitive, social and relational—which constitute the development potential of each territory. But there is also an intangible factor, "something in the air", called the "environment" or a combination of institutions, rules, practices, producers, researchers and policymakers, that make creativity and innovation possible (OECD,2001, p. 15). This relates to the 'creativity' dimension of placemaking identified by Richards (2020). Panzera also sees "territorial identity" as an economic development asset, increasing the efficiency of production factors. This can also be related to the 'meaning' dimension of placemaking (Richards, 2020).

Using this economically based placemaking approach, Panzera finds that UNESCO WHS can positively influence local regional economic dynamics when mediated by tourism attractiveness. Tourism is a 'significant channel' "through which tangible heritage stimulates economic growth….(therefore) the effort ….. of applying for getting the UNESCO label is worthwhile." This is especially true for regions with "hidden gems" or WHS with a low number of visitors. Cultural heritage can inspire a sense of belonging, attachment, affection and connection to a place and generate both bonding and bridging capital. However, because cultural heritage is location-specific it also helps create place distinctiveness and territorial uniqueness, which are fundamental competitive resources. For this reason, culture-led regeneration or place identification projects attract people, businesses, institutions and resources, fostering innovation and competitiveness. But the attractiveness of cultural heritage can also generate negative feelings among residents, as in the case of 'overtourism.'

Panzera (2022) confirms the strong relationships between cultural heritage and the sense of belonging to a wider community, while absence of cultural heritage is associated with a higher probability of individualistic localism. This indicates that the supply of built heritage sites can produce a "we-feeling" with a larger and mobile community, which includes tourists. However, the endowment of heritage must be "activated" to produce feelings of solidarity. For example, tourists are more likely to become involved when they have a link to place – place attachment, or place solidarity. Josiassen, Hede, Kozak, Kock and Assaf (2024) examine the development of place solidarity in relation to earthquakes in Turkey, for example.

The central role of place makes place relationships important. In the past, placemaking interventions were locally based, with residents at the centre. In placemaking approaches to tourism, the place attachment of non-locals must also be considered. How do we link a wide range of different stakeholders to place to ensure social and cultural sustainability and effective governance? Global mobility means a challenge of generating bridging capital, creating a mobile 'we' instead of a static 'us'.

Identity, sense of place and social cohesion are embedded in place capital and contribute, together with all other production factors, to the development of places. This can be termed the "territorial relational surplus" (Panzera, 2022), which suggests more attention is needed for 'soft factors' of development, also in rural regions. Identities are not singular or static, but multiple layers that often overlap and change. Many people have what Elif Shafak (2021) terms 'multiple belongings'. We can also etend this concept in the direction of 'diverse belongings', which also captures the argued positive effect of diversity on creativity (Florida, 2017), and therefore place.

Panzera (2022) empirically confirms that tangible cultural heritage and place identity interact and generate positive synergies for regional economic development. The relationship between tangible forms of cultural heritage and local economic dynamics are influenced by place identity. A cosmopolitan identity is needed to trigger the role of built heritage as a catalyst for economic development, because open mindsets, international orientations and curiosity can more effectively valorize cultural heritage as an engine for growth, particularly when these attitudes are accompanied by solidarity sentiments. In contrast, individualistic localism has a negative effect on cultural heritage

as a catalyst for growth. This may provide confirmation that the conservatism of many rural areas is a brake on development.

To overcome the parochialism of many RRA, an overarching logic is needed to link the local space of places to the global space of flows (Castells, 2000). In creative tourism, a logic may be found in the shared creative passion that links both producers and consumers to each other and to place (Richards & Wilson, 2006). The central creative activity should be 'characteristic' of the place (Richards & Raymond, 2000), which provides a logic for embedding, but the creativity of the activity itself provides a link in terms of knowledge and skills between the local and the tourist.

Similarly, Jones, Van Assche and Parkins (2021) argue that craft can act as a creative link between people and place, by connecting creativity and innovation to place and publics in ways that provide alternatives for sustaining local economies and local communities. They reject discourses of creative economies linked to capital accumulation and technological innovation, which are at odds with notions of craft as rooted in history, tradition, local materials and small-scale production.

Craftsmanship entails learning to do a discrete set of things really well, while the ideal of the new economy is to be able to learn new things perpetually, celebrating potential and adaptability rather than a fine-tuned achievement

Craft is therefore linked to place and traditional ways of doing rather than the new creative economy. Jones et al. (2021) examine several cases of craft development, which can be seen as a series of different business models. For example, wine networks can support branding and place making with very localised products and brands. Carmichael and Senese (2011) examine examples in Canada, which although initially based on cheap wine, have developed a new model where notions of craft, localism and place making are central. They view the landscape as a whole as an asset, to which individual engagement with the materials in craft production can add a layer of meaning for both craftspeople and customers and therefore in product and place branding. In order to develop local capacity, it is important to develop learning networks capable of linking craft to localism and placemaking.

Kastenholz, Marques and Carneiro (2020) examine place attachment in rural tourism, finding that different sensory experiences have a positive influence on visitors' emotions in rural contexts, including delight and relaxation. These emotions are moderated by length of stay. Place attachment is an emotional reaction, which varies between excursionists and tourists. A one-year survey in three Portuguese interior villages showed that tourists showed more intense sensorial experiences compared to day visitors. They suggest paying attention to branding designed to link through emotion, such as 'Celtic Wave', 'Atlantic Diet', etc.

Placemaking in the CROCUS Database

Our review of place-based and placemaking approaching suggests growing attention for these issues in tourism, but in terms of CCT in RRA, this focus is less evident. Only five relevant sources dealing with placemaking were found in the CROCUS literature review.

Duxbury (2021) in her analysis of creative work in rural areas makes a small reference to placemaking: "The growing prevalence of 'place-making' as a collaborative platform for creative local development initiatives also requires more attention in the context of fostering cultural and creative initiatives in smaller places (e.g., Richards & Duif, 2018). In these initiatives, care must be taken not to look only at the contributions that cultural work might make to other policy agendas, but also 'to recognize the inherent value and importance of culture per se' (O'Connell, 2020, 8)".

Verdini (2020) identifies three fundamental aspects of sustainable rural development in peripheral regions:

- place-making, community building and sustainability;
- local government, land use, and comprehensive planning; and
- effective horizontal and vertical governance.

He also makes an interesting observation on the nature of the 'rural' in small towns in Italy: "Labelling those areas as rural is deliberately avoided. 'Peripheral' instead allows to refer to rural or peri-urban localities relatively close to urban centers, excluding the very remote and isolated, where such analysis would be largely inapplicable" (Verdini, 2020, p. 4).

Verdini argues that the creative cities discourse has quickly evolved to encompass rural settlements. Firstly, because tourism has been a real driver of change for local rural economies and it has stimulated a creative and original reuse of local assets (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Secondly, because digital innovation and improved digital infrastructure has opened up new opportunities for rural local development. He sees research into the creative economy of rural areas as centred around the potential for digital connectivity to support local business and to enable creative people to live in rural regions, thus diversifying local economies. These development opportunities are linked to social innovation in rural areas, the quality of local institutions and the operation of complex multi-scalar governance systems. This once again underlines the fact that placemaking processes in RRA depend not just on the quality or attractiveness of place, but also on their networked connectedness.

In terms of tourism, Richards (2020) analyses the use of creative tourism as a tool for development, highlighting the need for a more holistic approach to placemaking in order to increase effectiveness. Creative placemaking is taken as an approach to experience design in tourism. The key design elements of this strategy were distilled by Richards and Duif (2019: 79–81) as inspiration, selection, providing structure, mobilizing people and resources, giving these meaning and finally using creativity to bring everything together. They identify a placemaking practice consisting of the interplay of resources (concrete space), meaning (lived space) and creativity (conceived space). Richards discusses different cases, including rural areas of Indonesia and Thailand, small cities and the 'creative region' of Nordrhein-Westfalen region in Germany. Richards emphasises the important role of "programming as a relational device". Creative programming can produce coherence between top-down and bottom-up approaches to placemaking. Different forms of creativity can provide a linking device between different groups and areas in order to create more coherent policies and activities. This is a point also underlined by Jones et al. (2022) in the realm of crafts.

Gyimóthy (2018) analyses the more specific example of film-induced tourism in the Swiss Alps as an attraction for Indian tourists. The growing 'Bollywood' film industry in Switzerland uses the rural areas of the country as a backdrop, attracting Indian tourists to visit the filming locations. But these visits are highly concentrated:

> "most groups are moving along a narrow beaten track stretching from Central Switzerland and the Berner Oberland … Typically, packages would include two of the three "double high-lights," such as Luzerne (with a visit to Mount Titlis), Interlaken (with a visit to Jungfraujoch), and Lausanne or Montreux." (p. 296).

The placemaking perspective is also narrow: "Despite the ever-increasing number of Asian tourists, a non-western sense of place and cultural contraflows are virtually absent in Swiss destination marketing materials. Websites and brochures are still dominated by White, middle-class couples/families and traditional tourism performances, while Asian/cosmopolitan tourist preferences and practices are largely ignored."

But there is potential to change this approach:

"If place marketers recognized the potential in alternative narratives, playful embodiments of natural landscapes as well as the desire for cultural exchanges, this could open the way for more sustainable commodification strategies that are embracing both community and new visitor preferences. Balancing and combining established imaginaries with global popular cultural projections (rather than silencing or keeping them apart) may provide innovative opportunities for destinations targeting overseas markets." (p. 311).

Fusté-Forné (2019) analyses the role of mushroom picking in the Catalan Pyrenees as a placemaking practice. He argues that wild mushroom hunting is a crucial (seasonal) lifestyle practice and an identity marker that illustrates how locals ascribe a particular meaning to place. Even though many of the participants are urban dwellers, many have links with the countryside via their relatives, and memories of previous trips to the mountains. Mushroom picking is arguably a cultural practice linked to rural areas that is sustainable and reinforces place connections and identity.

This brief review shows that there has been little attention paid to placemaking in the past, but it is becoming more important as an aspect of CCT in RRA. One of the problems in employing a placemaking approach is the wide variation in approaches that have emerged as the concept has moved from its original local physical planning basis towards wider spatial and cultural contexts.

3.4.4 Community involvement

The local community is vital for cultural heritage and tourism. Community members usually have the biggest stake in conserving tangible and intangible heritage, and they can influence the development of tourism. However, the 'community' is a nebulous concept (Hall & Richards, 2000), which tends to mask differences in attitudes and actions between individuals and groups. There are issues of (in)equality that need to be taken into account when considering how local communities engage with culture and tourism. Among the most important of these is the issue of gender, as Dauro Zocchi and Andrea Pozzi explore in their literature review on the topic in Section 3.4.5. Working with different communities across national borders is another issue of concern to the CROCUS Project, and this is also considered in Section 3.4.6 by Jarkko Saarinen and Bailey Adie.

Community attitudes and involvement

The concept of community is an important aspect of social sustainability, but one that is very difficult to define (Hall and Richards, 2000). Although people living in the same area might be assumed to have similar interests, attitudes towards tourism often diverge. One of the very few studies of the attitudes of different rural stakeholder groups involves the case of the Schist Villages Network of Portugal. Moutela, Carreira, and Martinez-Roget (2020) adopt a systemic stakeholder perspective on cultural heritage. They underline the importance of landscape, cultural and architectural values as important elements of tourist attraction. They found four stakeholder groups with very different interests:

- tourists and visitors, who travel to the tourist destination for different purposes, including learning or improving their knowledge about new cultures, heritage and ways of life or simply to relax and enjoy nature and the social environment.
- residents who want to offer visitors the best of their land and its people
- economic operators who seek to grow tourism as a source of revenue
- community leaders, who see tourism development as a means of promoting their territory and the success of their policies.

Moutela et al. found differences between these groups in terms of satisfaction, with residents and economic operators wanting a better use of local resources. Tourists were generally more satisfied with their heritage experience. However, there was convergence between stakeholders in terms of the development of cultural activities and their promotion to tourists and visitors.

In Montenegro, Moric, Pekovic, Janinovic, Perovic and Griesbeck (2021) analysed the effects of the national Cultural Tourism Development Programme. They found that many locals are unfamiliar with existing cultural heritage, primarily due to a lack of awareness about its historical, artistic, socio-cultural, and economic values. This was identified as a significant obstacle to more (pro)active local community involvement. In Cyprus, Liasidou, Stylianou, Berjozkina and Garanti (2021) found that residents consider tourism to be positive, but they expressed concerns about government policies. There are gaps between rural areas in terms of development because of the generally grass-roots

nature of development. Locals are getting involved in tourism by setting up business outlets, mainly restaurants and accommodation units.

Gica, Coros, Moisescu and Yallop (2021) examine regenerative tourism in the village of Viscri in Romania. The church of Viscri is one of the 6 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Romania, but the village is probably more famous for having a house owned by King Charles of the UK. Cultural tourism development started in 1991 with a traditional dance and music festival and Viscri also had a "cosmopolitan leader" of Saxon origin, who was one of the few members of this group to stay after the fall of communism.

> I was interested in helping my community. I wanted to help people to have a better life in my village [...] When the Saxons all left for Germany, we decided not to leave. For two reasons: to try to preserve what our ancestors did in the past and I thought that we had the opportunity to live in a democracy and do something for the community.

She created a project to develop the whole village, using an integrative approach including training in traditional crafts. In spite of the relative success of this project, there were many barriers, including a general lack of entrepreneurship, shortage of resources, a lack of support from the local and regional administration and insecurity and reluctance of local people. These were overcome through collaborative action, with regular meetings of stakeholders and monitoring of progress. There is a sense that a balance is needed, however: …"we dictate what we want. In six months, we don't get tourists, we work with the community. Six months we earn money and six months are for us. We don't want to have tourists at any cost. We can do it because we have so many tourists [...] other villages are still trying to make it work."

This form of community-based tourism has arguably been successful because of effective leadership and community empowerment, supported by a sound legal and regulatory framework. This extended into networking and partnerships with external stakeholders but this kind of approach also needs vision and leadership, entrepreneurial skills and mobilization of resources.

The Andalucian village of Benalauría has undergone a process of tourism deactivation not due to declining demand but to a deliberate reduction in supply by residents in order to increase their quality of life (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Gonzalez-Portillo, 2024). Benalauría had become a 'village-hotel' because of the conversion of the building stock to tourist use. However, villagers gradually decided to withdraw from tourism, reducing accommodation supply by 50%.

> "I want a hotel that adapts to my life and not the other way around, a model of tourism and hospitality that adapts to my life project, that is my concept of rural tourism, a very far cry from working in the restaurant…."

Because almost 90% of local families own their own homes, mortgage free, they can afford to give up income from tourism. Their expenditure is low, they have access to local public services and there is a solid family and mutual support network. According to Ruiz-Ballesteros and Gonzalez-Portillo (2024) "limiting of tourism seen in Benalauría is a consequence of local agency based on decisions grounded in reflections about consumption capacity and quality of life…….decisions that limit the weight of tourism activity at the domestic level and cumulatively at the local level are put into practice from the ground up, by individuals and their families." Ruiz-Ballesteros and Gonzalez-Portillo (2024) typify this as 'post-capitalist tourism' linked to degrowth:

> " The inhabitants of Benalauría compare the benefits of participating in tourism businesses with the quality of life they pursue, and consequently decide to stop participating in tourism if they understand that tourism harms their desired quality of life."

In the Central Region of Portugal Dinis, Simões, Cruz and Teodoro (2019) examine the role of rural tourism hosts in stimulating development. They find an intention-behaviour gap stemming from

conflicting business and personal goals. Public policies designed to stimulate heritage recovery are more influential than business goals in development decisions.

A concern for the impact of tourism on daily life was also noted by Strzelecka, Boley and Strzelecka (2017) in the Polish village of Choczewo. They found significant social distance between residents and local authorities to be large. This research also demonstrated that psychological and social empowerment are influenced by residents' emotional bonds with places and nature. They suggest future research should include place identity, place dependence and nature bonding constructs when considering residents' ability to be empowered through tourism.

In the Czech village of Lipno, which has a significant population of Dutch second home owners, "The Dutch do not go to see the locals, and the locals rarely go to see the Dutch" (Horáková, 2010). The mayor said: "I want the Dutch to be on the area of 13 hectares so that they do not bother the locals in the village, so that they stay in their own places." Horáková (2010) examines the costs and benefits of second homes for the two communities. In terms of benefits there are economic and social arguments: the injection of money into the local economy and combatting population decline. Tourism stabilized the population of the village and raised incomes, supporting small-scale entrepreneurial activities and helping to create a new middle-income population. However, negative consequences included the undermining of social networks, and rising prices of food, rents, local houses, and community services. The benefits of tourism are also distributed unevenly among the local population.

Horáková (2010) points out that a big failure of previous research is separating the social consequences of tourism from other processes of change occurring independently in a society. "A fundamental question is whether it is tourism that is responsible for the changes observed, or some other factors." In other words, incomers can become, rather like other groups of migrants, 'conspicuous scapegoats'.

Kastenholz, Carneiro, Eusébio and Figueiredo (2013) analysed the interaction of tourists and residents in two Portuguese villages.   They found three clusters of tourists:

> Cluster 1 – introvert visitors showing less interaction with others.
>
> Cluster 2 –tourist-focused interactors
>
> Cluster 3 –resident-focused interactors.

The third group seek more intense inter-action with residents, participating in more activities (including walking on trails, rural activities, tasting local food) and looking for a more 'authentic' experience . They buy more local products, are more immersed in local culture, and are more satisfied with their experience. This cluster includes a relatively higher proportion of foreign tourists.

Kastenholz et al. suggest that resident–tourist interaction can be enhanced through the promotion of 'a truly village-focused tourism experience', with greater length of stay and co-creative tourist experiences where residents can transmit their culture and traditions. These could include cooking courses, handicraft or agriculture workshops and other 'creative tourism' experiences. But interaction with other tourists is also important, and those interacting more with fellow tourists have a higher level of curiosity because they are not immersed as much in local culture. This may be an opportunity for locals to provide this group with socializing opportunities. Interaction with locals can arguably offer visitors a deeper, more 'authentic' and more meaningful experience that should also be more memorable.

In the case of the Portuguese hinterland villages suffering population ageing and depopulation, these interaction opportunities may be limited but could be enhanced by lifestyle entrepreneurs investing in tourism and acting as 'cultural brokers' (or switchers) of a rural living context they identify with and are passionate about.

3.4.5 Gender-related issues in Rural Areas

Overview of the analysed sources

The review comprised a total of 97 sources categorized into three main types: articles, books and book chapters, and proceedings papers. The majority of the sources were articles (research and review), totalling 85, followed by 4 books and book chapters, and 7 proceedings papers.

The temporal distribution of the sources spans from 1987 to 2024, with a noticeable increase in publications over the last decade. Notably, the year 2022 saw the highest number of publications, with 13. The years 2014, 2016, and 2020 also demonstrated significant scholarly output, with 7, 8, and 7 sources respectively.

Figure 3.19: Temporal distribution of the published sources
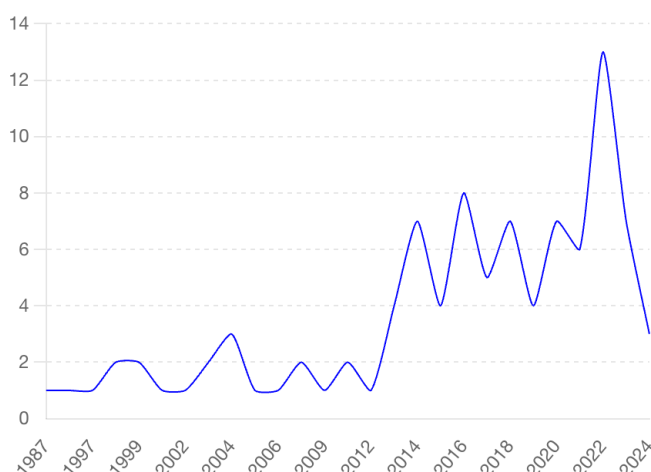
The sources were published in 58 academic journals, especially in tourism-related journals as well as in sociological journals. The journals with the highest number of articles include *Sustainability* with 6 articles, followed by the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* with 4 articles. Several journals such as *Ager-Revista De Estudios Sobre Despoblacion Y Desarrollo Rural*, *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Cuadernos Geograficos* have published 3 articles each (Fig. 4.4.2).

Figure 3.20: Distribution of Articles Across Journals

Distribution of Articles Across Academic Journals
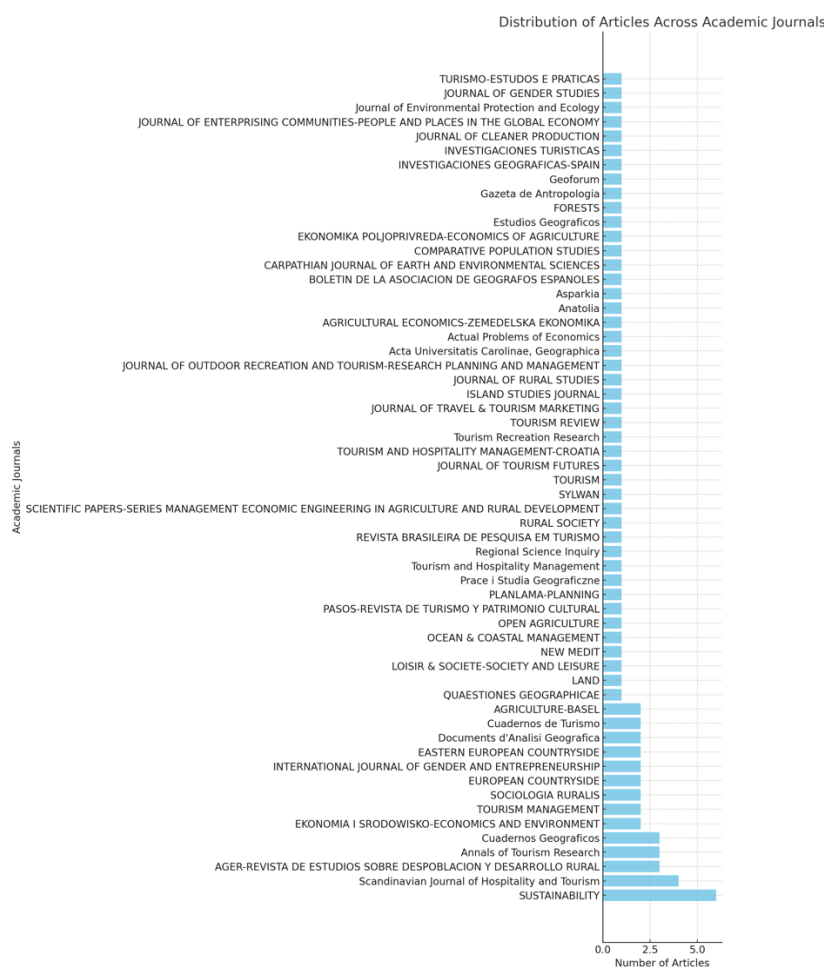
Keywords and thematic clusters

342 unique keywords were identified and grouped into 9 different clusters, each representing a specific aspect of rural tourism research:

- *Economic and Market Analysis in Tourism:* This cluster includes keywords related to the economic aspects of tourism, such as market analysis, community-based tourism, and sustainable tourism.
- *Social and Community Aspects of Rural Tourism:* Keywords in this cluster focus on the social and community dimensions of rural tourism, including rural area development, rural hospitality, and the role of women in the rural economy.
- *Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources:* This cluster is centered around environmental concerns and natural resources, incorporating keywords like gender equality, gender roles, and environmental perceptions.
- *Tourism Management and Quality Assessment:* Keywords in this cluster address the management and quality assessment of tourism, with a focus on factors like local development, sustainable development goals, and quality of destination.
- *Cultural and Heritage Tourism:* This cluster includes keywords related to the cultural and heritage aspects of tourism, such as family business, business success, and rural family business.

- *Innovation and Technology in Rural Tourism:* This is the largest cluster and encompasses keywords related to innovations and technological advancements in rural tourism. Examples include digital nomads, eco-development, smart villages, and many more.
- *Migration and Demographic Changes:* Keywords in this cluster pertain to migration and demographic trends affecting rural tourism, such as leisure-time behavior, physical recreation, and sustainable behavior.
- *Sports and Recreational Activities:* This cluster includes keywords associated with sports and recreational activities in rural tourism, such as female entrepreneurship, women's eco-entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship.
- *Educational and Capacity Building in Rural Areas:* Keywords here focus on education and capacity building within rural tourism, including governance, good governance, and territorial governance.

Main study areas

Of the 74 out of 97 sources where explicit mention was made to case studies related to geographical areas, 28 were linked to Spain, followed by Poland with 7, Norway with 6, and both Portugal and Sweden with 5 each. Serbia had 4 studies, while the UK accounted for 3. Several countries including the Czech Republic, Finland, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey each had 2 studies. Finally, Croatia, France, Hungary, and Moldova each had one study. This distribution shows a significant concentration of research in Spain, indicating a potentially higher focus or relevance of gender-related rural studies in that country.

Observations

The intersection of gender and rural areas reveals how tourism activities influence gender dynamics. This includes the participation of women in tourism-related activities and the impact on gender equality and social inclusion.

Agritourism highlights the pivotal role women play in farm tourism and rural development. In this regard, the literature explores women's engagement in agritourism, the challenges they face, and the opportunities for empowerment and economic independence.

The contributions of women to rural business development, the types of enterprises they engage in, and the challenges they encounter are examined in the considered materials.

Wine tourism impacts rural development and gender issues, with studies examining its role in local economies and gender dynamics. The participation of women in wine tourism and the associated benefits and challenges are highlighted.

Cultural tourism has profound social impacts, particularly concerning gender roles. The literature explores how cultural tourism activities contribute to social development and the role of women in these activities, discussing the preservation of cultural heritage, community involvement, and gender equality.

Family dynamics, leisure activities, and women's empowerment are interconnected in rural tourism. Studies on family involvement in tourism, leisure pursuits, and the empowerment of women through these activities are examined, highlighting the importance of leisure activities in promoting social cohesion and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas.

Key Issues Highlighted

Women's Entrepreneurship: The role of women entrepreneurs in rural and agritourism settings is pivotal. Research shows that women entrepreneurs may contribute significantly to local economies, create jobs, and foster innovation in rural tourism.

Gender and Development: Studies highlight the need for gender-sensitive policies and practices to ensure equitable development and the active participation of women in economic activities.

Women's Empowerment: Empowerment through entrepreneurship and community involvement is a recurring theme. Sources tackling this topic aim to explore how tourism and business activities empower women, enhance their social status, and provide them with economic independence.

Gender Inequality: Despite progress, gender inequality remains a challenge in rural areas. Issues such as work-life balance, economic disparities, and access to resources are discussed, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to address these challenges and promote gender equality.

3.4.6   Cross-border collaboration

The effects of cross-border collaboration have been examined along different EU borders, and in respect of different types of tourism, including cultural tourism. For example, Hardi, Kupi, Ocskay & Szemerédi (2021) analyse cross-border cultural tourism on the Slovak–Hungarian border, in the context of the SPOT Horizon 2020 Project. They found that although there are some collaborative activities progress has been very slow, in spite of a shared cultural history. In the cross border city of Komárom/Komárno, lack of integration is exacerbated by differences in the cultural resources involved. Historical buildings are the main attractions in Hungarian Komárom, centered on the Fortification System. In Slovak Komárno, intangible culture in the form of cultural festivals and theatre (especially Hungarian-language theatre) underpin the cultural offerings.

Timothy and Saarinen (2013) took a broad view of cross-border co-operation in European tourism. They distinguished among four scales of cross-border collaboration: global organizations, regional alliances, bilateral networks, and inter-local cooperation. They illustrate how EU programmes such as the structural funds have promoted cross-border working, and tourism and culture have been important elements of this. In a similar vein, Stoffelen and Vanneste (2017) examined the European Union experience of de-bordering and how this had affected cross-border collaboration. They argued that cross-border collaboration within Europe relied on informal networks that build capacity and trust, as well as developing 'thick' institutional relations. Making this work requires an overarching vision that includes cultural and social aspects and building trust on both sides of the border.

In general, however, there has been relatively little academic research in relation to cross-border collaboration in CCT in RRA.

One of the most intensely studied areas of cross-border collaboration in the EU is the Croatian borders with Hungary and Slovenia, which reflects the well-developed (cultural) tourism research tradition in Croatia.

Waniek, Franco, Correia, Gómez, Vulevic and Castanho (2023) examine cross-border collaboration between Slovenia and Croatia, where development programmes have generated 800,000 new visitors to natural and cultural heritage sites in recent years. The region faces a range of challenges, including weak economic activity, unemployment, migration of young adults, and an aging population. The aim is to jointly develop new shared cross-border tourism products, including 17 new heritage services. This is funded by the INTERREG V-A Slovenia-Croatia Cooperation Programme, which has a specific tourism objective: "Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation". Actions include – "Supporting sustainable tourism and green transition of public and private organisations through pilot actions, collaborative learning, and awareness raising of tourists and all stakeholders in tourism and culture" and "Modernising tourism and cultural organisations and institutions to meet the demands of modern visitors." One innovative integrated cross-border cultural and tourism product is "Living Magic – Stories from Pohorje and Istria".

On the Croatian border with Hungary, Marton, Raffay, Barcza and Gonda (2021) note that the quality and the tourism potential of attractions for cultural tourism are rather limited. Although there are cultural tourism resources, these are not managed or marketed. They only offer a short programme for visitors travelling to or across the region, such as viewing old churches with painted wooden ceiling blocks or a brief stay and look around in the Ormánság Museum in Sellye. Tourism development is also limited by accommodation supply. In 2019, there were only 20 accommodation units in the whole of the Dráva Region, which attracts about 148,000 excursionists a year. The 2014–2020 Interreg V-A Hungary–Croatia Cooperation Programme included 17 tourism projects (9 in the category 'tourism attraction development' and 8 in 'theme routes and other tourism products'). Cycling tourism is one tourism product that has been given significant attention in the recent past.

Čelan (2021) identified the major problems of cross-border tourism between Hungary and Croatia as follows:

- the low permeability of the border
- the majority of tourism projects have very low real cross-border effect;
- many barriers for co-operation exist, from poor permeability of the border to the language barrier;
- co-operation and funding are concentrated where there are border crossings.

Lempek, Tésits and Hoványi (2022) argue that in spite of cross border programmes, tourism development has not been able to fully exploit the potential of border regions.

On the border between Croatia and Slovenia, Horjan (2011) examined the role of traditional crafts as a new attraction for cultural tourism. There is little linkage between 'rural tourism' and craftspeople or well-known traditional sites. However, a series of exhibitions organised in five towns – two in Croatia and three in Slovenia - exhibiting products from both sides of the border managed to generate some attention. An expert conference in the cross-border area emphasised the involvement of the younger generation in capacity building. Educational workshops on crafts and skills were an important part of the project.

Timothy and Saarinen (2013) analysed cross-border ski areas that work together between Sweden and Finland, as well as trans-frontier protected areas, as illustrations of local cross-border collaboration. Svensson, Sörlin and Saltzmann (2021 also examined the Swedish-Norwegian border trail Finnskogleden. The trail is situated in a forested area of Sweden where Finnish-speaking immigrants settled. Svensson et al. examined how the local, regional and national (and later EU) levels of governance worked together to stimulate regional development initiatives, many of which were related to tourism. This involved municipalities coming together in the cross-border organization ARKO (Arvika and Kongsvinger kommuner). Collaboration was helped by a long tradition of cross-border cooperation stimulated by shared economic problems.

A specific initiative of particular relevance to cross-border cultural collaboration is the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) for 2025, which is being staged by the twin cities of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy). Once separated by the Iron Curtain, these cities have joined together to stage "the European capital of borderless culture". (Di Gaetano, 2024). Although the ECoC event is hosted by cities, the declining size of the host city over the years means that the ECoC event is now often held in cities in rural regions, and a specific requirement of the ECoC Programme is that the city should involve the surrounding region. This has led to many ECoC cultural programmes involving cultural and creative events in rural and remote areas, as in the case of Sibiu (2007), Stavanger (2008) and Esch (2022) (Richards & Rotariu, 2015; Richards, 2024a). Oulu will be the ECoC for 2026, together with 39 surrounding municipalities. The Oulu 2026 programme includes the Creative Triangle Project focusing on developing cooperation between creators of art and culture, programme and event services, and tourism, aiming to foster business activities and enhance regional vitality.

Morales Yago, Martínez Puche and Martínez Puche (2018) examined the use of historic festivals as a generator of internal 'frontier tourism' between the regions of Castilla and Aragon in Spain. They

identify the fiestas of Yecla and Villena as potential sources of cultural and creative tourism. In Villena the Fiestas de Moros y Cristianos involve more than 11,000 participants (35 % of the population). There has been a process of 'festivalisation', stimulated by the designation of the event as a Fiesta de Interés Turístico Nacional in 2015. Yago et al. characterise these events as "cultural-creative tourism".

In their review of Finnish studies of cross-border collaboration in CCT, Saarinen and Adie found there were no academic literature beyond the Finnish-Russian border (war heritage, see Raivo, 2002). However, there are several studies published in English on governance and policy collaborations over the border(less) of Finland and Sweden, which include tourism and mobility aspects but are outside this extra assessment. Furthermore, there are some highly CCT relevant policy documents focusing on the Finnish Lapland (rural and remote areas) (e.g. Veijola & Kyyrö, 2020), but they do not include cross-border element.

Terzieva (2016) studied entrepreneurial learning in cross-border cultural tourism development between Bulgaria and Romania, finding that many barriers still exist between two countries that relatively recently acceded to the EU. In the context of innovation, Makkonen, Williams, Weidenfeld and Kaisto (2018) came up with slightly different findings on the Finnish-Russian border. They concluded that in extra-EU collaboration, dissimilarity between the two sides of the border actually facilitated learning, knowledge transfer and innovation. There are numerous other studies of cross-border collaboration in tourism in general, including across the Slovenian- Croatian border, (Vodeb, 2006) and between Finland and Sweden (Prokkola, 2007). The overall impression that emerges from these studies is that cross-border collaboration remains difficult, and it needs a high level of trust and good governance practices to succeed. The importance of governance is also highlighted by King, Richards and Chu (2023), who specifically highlight the role of culture in governance, or a process of 'cultural governance'. Cultural governance implies a multi-level negotiation of the power of cultural symbols attached to place in order to achieve policy goals.

A specific analysis of cross-border collaboration for the CROCUS Project by Jarkko Saarinen and Adie Bailey in Finland highlights a relative lack of cross-border research of CCT in RRA. They found no academic sources in Finnish beyond the Finnish-Russian border (war heritage, see Raivo, 2002). However, there are several studies published in English on governance and policy collaborations over the border(less) of Finland and Sweden, which include some tourism and mobility aspects. Furthermore, there are some highly CCT relevant policy documents focusing on the Finnish Lapland (rural and remote areas)(e.g. Veijola & Kyyrö, 2020), but they do not include a cross-border element.

The main conclusion from the review of cross-border collaboration in CCT is that there are numerous barriers that need to be overcome, including economic, social and cultural ones. Facilitating cross-border collaboration in the CROCUS Project will therefore need careful analysis of the specific situations of each of the Living Lab programmes in order to identify the most effective course of action.

3.5   Future trends

One of the most important functions of the current review is to provide guidance on what kinds of research are needed in the CROCUS project. To provide some indication of research directions, this section of the review concentrates on future trends identified in the CCT literature on RRA from the CROCUS database.

In terms of the future development of cultural tourism, Richards (2021c) gave some initial indications of areas that could become more important and new emerging areas of research. These include the role of new technologies, which in turn are linked to changing skills and competences. Whereas in the past guidebooks tended to provide the basic indication of where to go and what to do, the Internet, the smartphone and social media are increasingly fulfilling this function. Rural tourism consumption will therefore increasingly be influenced by new technologies and the groups that use them, with the rise of 'social curation' (Richards, 2024b) being of particular interest. Changing information sources

and experiences will in turn demand new skills and competences from tourists and tourism suppliers alike. Peer to peer and user generated content will be increasingly important in cultural and creative tourism in future, meaning that tourists and suppliers alike will have to become more skilled in identifying 'genuine' information. These channels will also provide more opportunities to 'live like a local' and to experience networked relationality. These issues have so far been analysed in an urban context, so there is a lack of research on RRA.

Future trends in cultural tourism are also addressed by Matteucci and Moretti (2025), who emphasise the importance of governance, consumption and technology. They highlight a number of key future trends, including Immersive and transformative cultural tourism experiences, Socio-material teaching and cultural sensitivity as a post-humanist worldview, Participatory (bottom-up) heritage management, Collaborative and creative experiences and Slowness and authenticity.

The near future will see the emergence of new cultural and creative tourism practices, as well as groups shifting between practices and making new connections between practices. Some of the consequences of this are already becoming visible, as in the spread of 'underground' culture from urban to rural areas, and vice versa. Perkins, Mackay and Massacesi (2023), for example, identify the spread of street art murals in rural Aotearoa (New Zealand). As these creative practices move to new areas, not only does the context and materials change, but the meaning as well.

Richards (2021a) argues that cultural tourists are increasingly threading their way through the nexus of practices in the destination, linking different practices as they move. This will tend to emphasise the role of storytelling and other linking devices, such as cultural and creative routes. When the linkages in cultural and creative tourism shift from a linear to a networked dimension, this also provides possibilities for more widespread placemaking strategies. In rural areas there is potential for placemaking to utilise the raw materials of the countryside to provide high value experiences, such as the creation of 'gastroscapes' that incorporate food producers and creatives (Richards, 2021d). When elements of identity are woven into such practicescapes, the potential for value creation, and for linking together different actors, becomes even greater.

Creating shared meanings between different actors in RRA is also important for future governance mechanisms, particularly when these cross political boundaries. In the recent past the development of cross-border projects through programmes such as LEADER has generated physical connections, but these need to be animated and given meaning through creative governance arrangements and the activation of meanings. Even though cultural routes are now being created throughout Europe, we still have little understanding of how these affect cultural and creative tourism, and whether they are effective in meeting their goals, which often include attracting tourists to new areas.

Future cultural tourism research could pay more attention to how communities emerge around rural cultural tourism practices, and what these mean to people. In this sense, there are potentially big differences between European macro regions, in terms of the linkages between urban and rural areas. Second home tourism is particularly prevalent in the Nordic countries, where, as Müller (2020, p. 91) notes, "second-home tourism research has been highly productive and influential." He emphasises the need for future research to assess second homes in their geographical contexts, which also includes RRAs and the different macro regions.

3.6   Conclusions of the Thematic Review of the CROCUS Database

This thematic review of the CCT literature focussing on RRA has underlined the breadth of the field, covering issues related to trends cultural, creative and rural tourism, the rural and remote geographies related to these, the resources utilised for CCT, governance issues and future trends. Although we have identified some areas with a rich research tradition, including cultural tourism demand and tourist profiles, gastronomy and wine and heritage accommodation. However, there are still many other areas in need of research attention.

In particular, there has been relatively little consideration of the type of place-based approaches to development suggested by the EU macro-regions. These are issues that we return to in more detail in section 5. In the following section we consider the different macro-regions identified by the EU and the implications that these have for CCT and the development of CCT business models in RRA. The development of a place-based approach to CCT also requires appropriate governance models, which is also a weakness in the current research on CCT in RRA. Cross-border collaboration also emerges as a current blind spot, with little attention having been paid to cross-border CCT development or the governance structures that are associated with such programmes.

The main focus of research remains on individual products in RRA and the utilisation of tangible resources for cultural tourism. Although studies of intangible heritage resources are increasing, there is still a relative lack of work on strategies to harness intangible heritage resources, such as storytelling and interpretation. There is also little work on creative tourism in RRA compared to the previous focus on cultural tourism, particularly related to tangible heritage resources.

This lack of work also includes an almost total ignorance of the development of the EU macro-regional policies and their impact on CCT business models in RRA. This important theme of the CROCUS Project is the subject of the following section.

4 CCT macro-regional geographies

4.1 Introduction

Spatial development policy in the European Union has entered a new phase with the definition of four macro-regions. Macro-regional strategies aim to promote cohesion and place-based development, which reflects a turn in EU policy from largely sectoral interventions towards a more specific place-based perspective. The place-based approach aims to support local and regional initiatives that could benefit from macro-regional cooperation. The macro-regional approach provides bridges between overarching European political priorities and local needs. This includes initiatives to use digitalisation to strengthen the resilience of mountain and rural villages and developing small-scale territorial brands in the agri-food sector. Macro-regional activities aim to promote participatory and bottom-up approaches to support entrepreneurship, transnational clusters and digital innovation hubs and gender equality in innovation and entrepreneurship. In line with these priorities, themes which require particular attention in the current review include sustainable tourism development in RRA, placemaking and cross-border cooperation.

Figure 4.1: EU Macro-regional strategies

European Commission (2017), New study of EU macro-regional strategies, "Macro-regional strategies and their links with cohesion policy"

The Council of Europe (2020) publication "Cultural tourism in the EU macro-regions" specifically addresses the relationship between CCT and the macro-regions, although in a fairly general way. It suggests that each EU macro-region has a common cultural heritage with which they can be identified (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Heritage focus in EU macro-regions

Macro-region	Heritage focus
Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)	Maritime heritage
Danube Region (EUSDR)	Prehistoric heritage
Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)	Lifestyle heritage
Alpine Region (EUSALP)	Food heritage

Source: Council of Europe (2020, p. 67).

Even though one might be able to associate each macro-region with a certain type of heritage as suggested by the Council of Europe (2020), the diversity of heritage resources in each region means that there is far more potential for development beyond these general themes. In particular, this categorisation implies a lack of dynamism, focussing on narrow heritage categories, based largely on the past. The rest of this section examines the literature related to CCT in RRA in each macro-region to identify their development potential. For each country included in the review, we asked the researchers to identify the important areas of CCT in their country and to address the basic questions: What is different about CCT in RRA in your country?, and What has changed in CCT in RRA in recent years?

4.2 *Baltic (Denmark, Estonia, Finland)*

The Baltic Sea region has a population of around 85 million, including all or part of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The Baltic is an enclosed marine region facing a range of environmental, social and economic challenges. The objectives of the macro-regional policy are: to save the Baltic Sea; to connect the region, and; to increase prosperity. Tourism, culture and innovation are among the policy priorities, very much in line with the work of the CROCUS Project. One of the tourism challenges facing the Baltic region is to address the disparities between coastal and inland areas, which can arguably be addressed through CCT. CROCUS partners here include The University of Aalborg in Denmark, Tallinn University in Estonia and Oulu University in Finland.

4.2.1   Synthesis of the literature on Cultural and Creative Tourism in Denmark

Coastal and rural areas are a significant part of Danish tourism, accounting for more than two-thirds of total overnight stays and being popular as a destination for both Danes and international guests, particularly the neighbouring countries. Although nature is the main driver of tourism in rural and coastal areas, efforts continue to increase synergistic combinations of culture and nature experiences, which enrich tourists' experiences in rural areas, on rainy days and outside the main season (DKNT, 2024).

The Danish cultural tourism landscape is characterised by small and large museums located in rural areas, several of which have become flagships in their region due to the iconic architecture and high-quality museum visit. As examples, we find Tirpitz in Southern Denmark (Tirpitz, 2024) and Regan Vest in Himmerland (Nordjyske Museer, 2024). Especially throughout the summer, we also find many events and festivals, such as music festivals, historic fairs and food and markets. Skagen, a former fishing village located in North Jutland, is one of Denmark's most well-known tourism destinations due

to its museums celebrating the community of Impressionist artists who visited the area in the late 19th century.

The cultural and historical heritage of the Vikings form a strong Nordic brand, and several museums and historical monuments tell their story. Most recently, the Viking Castles of Harald Blåtand were designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites (UNESCO, 2023). Denmark is also rich in architectural heritage, with the city of Christiansfeld and Roskilde Cathedral likewise have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage (UNESCO, 2023).

New Nordic gastronomy has also become very trendy and an important cultural resource that has gradually gained a more significant presence in rural and remote areas (Gyimothy, 2017; James & Maniche, 2017).

What is different about CCT in RRA in your country? What are the important areas?

It is difficult to identify distinct characteristics in the small body of literature on cultural tourism in Denmark. The documents collected as part of CROCUS span from 2000-2019, with diverse angles on cultural tourism in RRA, such as networks (Bærenholdt & Haldrup, 2006), cultural heritage (Grydehøj, 2012; J. Liburd, 2007), innovation (Hjalager et al., 2018), place-branding (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014) and authenticity (Prince, 2016). Cultural activities examined include (food) festivals (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014; Hjalager et al., 2016; Hjalager & Kwiatkowski, 2018), Manor houses (Frausing, 2012) and Museums/living history (Holtorf, 2014).

Documents were found in both Danish and English. and the documents gathered in Danish are primarily reports aimed at a practitioner audience. All of them mention that tourism has the potential to aid in the rejuvenation/development of a rural area to some extent. In some texts, this is the main focus of the document and in others it is mentioned more in passing. This may be because the documents in Danish are reports funded by municipalities, ministries or other political (research) organisations which view tourism as a driver for development in rural areas first, and development of cultural tourism second. In the English-language documents, which are all academic papers, only a single paper highlights cultural tourism as an asset suited for developing rural and remote areas (Swensen, 2008).

The vast majority of papers are centred around cultural tourism in rural areas. Only three papers are centred around creative tourism, more precisely studies conducted on the island of Bornholm, where we find a community and network of craft-artists (Prince, 2016, 2017, 2018).

What has changed in CCT in RRA in recent years (major trends)?

Some of the earlier documents have focused on the use of CCT for the development and rejuvenation of rural and remote areas. Here tourism is seen as a possible substitution or additional economical support for failing industries in rural and remote areas, such as fishing and agriculture (Callisen et al., 2008; Lyck, 2012; Møller Christensen, 2004; Swensen, 2008). Interestingly, the most recent paper is critical of this approach, since it was found that residents did not want their town to become a 'museum town', where their history/culture was only for show (Ounanian, 2019).

A potential trend identified in the academic literature is the increased importance of the topic of authenticity. Grydehøj (2012) studied how increased tourism flows to the island of Ærø affect residents' identity and perception of authenticity. Holtorf (2014) studied living history in the museum of Lejre and how authenticity was constructed and lived by guests. The co-creation of rural authenticity in tourism development is also touched upon, and lastly, Ounanian (2019) studied community perceptions of authenticity in connection to the fishing and tourism sectors and the relationships therein.

Lastly, while not reflected in the literature, it is worth noting that in the past 10 years, we have seen an increase in large cultural attractions which are being built in rural and remote areas. They are usually to a very large extent funded by private foundations and become 'flagship' attractions in their region.

Examples include Museum Tirpitz and Regan Vest, both helping to increase synergies between cultural and rural/coastal tourism.

4.2.2 A synthesis of the cultural and creative tourism literature in Estonia

There is not too much research literature on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas. Most of the material is available in forms of Bachelor and Master's theses in various universities (Estonian University off Life Sciences, University of Tartu and its Pärnu College, Tallinn University). That said, there seems to be an increasing interest in tourism issues among university students.

Often there is no distinction in documents and development plans between different sub-branches of tourism – it's understood as tourism in general, without much distinction.

Rural tourism seems to concentrate around two general foci, one being related to nature and the environment in wider terms, the other on heritage. Of course there are overlaps between these two foci.

There are regional differences between how tourism is handled by local governments. Some of them include:

Ida-Virumaa, the study area of a previous EU project, SPOT, seems to have both foci involved, and here the distinction between the two is perhaps the biggest and most visible. On the one hand, the county advertises itself as Seiklusmaa – land of adventures. Since it is a former mining area, now largely abandoned, it offers all sorts of possibilities for adventures, be it a jeep safari on the ash heaps or an exploration of ruins of the former mines and other outdoor activities. On the other hand, art residencies etc are slowly coming up in, e.g., Narva (well, the third largest town of Estonia, hardly rural, but definitely remote). Since the population in this area is mostly Russian-speaking and St Petersburg is close by (some 125 km from Narva) the area had made some quite extensive tourism development plans that were based on the transboundary cooperation with Russia. After COVID and especially the war in Ukraine broke out, all these plans were cancelled and the area is re orientating itself on finding new markets.

The south-eastern corner of Estonia tries to develop heritage tourism. The smoke sauna tradition of this area has been included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage. This provides rather good grounds for both boosting the local identity and studying this change. A documentary, *Savusanna sõsarad*, depicting the smoke sauna traditions, won several awards in European film festivals in 2023, and this helps promote the area. The research focuses on how traditions and heritage have been used in supporting the local identity, which in terms is based largely on language differences and cultural distinction from the rest of Estonia. The tourism here is small-scale, community-based, and directed towards exposing the heritage. The trend seems to be towards increasing these small-scale activities, also by offering (international) summer camps to teach children local music(al instruments), organising festivals etc. However, tourism seems to be very seasonal here, with most activities happening during the three summer months (June-August) while almost nothing happens during the rest of the year.

The coast of Lake Peipsi in the east promotes food tourism. Largely based on the culture of the Starovery (old-style Russian orthodox church, persecuted in Russia since 17th century, people fled the Russian empire and settled here, no language barriers) this culture is based on the fish caught from the lake (fifth biggest in Europe) and onions and garlic grown in the backyards. All this culture has created a specific landscape that is celebrated in August during the onion and garlic festivals. Also, winter (ice) fishing and the culture connected to this activity is getting increasing attention.

Finally, Mulgimaa, the CROCUS test area in Estonia. This region borders with Latvia. Heritage-based tourism, is mostly targeted toward boosting local identity. It is not quite clear who the target group is who is expected to come and visit, as most events seem to be addressing local people. There seems to be interest toward trans-border cooperation, but the missing common language provides problems.

However, there seems to be a growing understanding to open themselves up to first domestic tourism and also towards neighbouring Latvia.

4.2.3   4.1.4 Literature on CCT in RRA in Finland

What characterises CCT in RRA in Finland?

While tourism, in general, and cultural tourism in particular, are often the most voluminous and economically significant in urban environments, a clear majority of published CCT research in Finnish focusses on RRAs. There the social and economic aspects of CCT are also perceived to be the largest (in relative sense). The emphasis is more on cultural than creative tourism (obviously, depending on how we define these terms) in published material.

Thematically, the publications focus on: (1) products and attractions; (2) ethnicity; (3) planning and management; (4) arts and artistic work; and (5) producer and consumer perspectives in CCT. In addition, sustainability is strongly linked many of the themes, especially the themes (2) and (3).

The products and attractions theme covers the CCT offer in RRAs. This is a typical approach in CCT studies, in general. Specific sub-themes include local food, authenticity, and local culture and narratives (Ilmonen, 2016; Lüthje & Saari, 2018). Interestingly, there is a relatively strong emphasis on nature and nature-based products and traditions used and commodified in CCT. Paloniemi et al. (2018), for example, integrate nature, natural resources and local communities' living with nature to CCT. Similarly, Sivonen (2013) integrates geoparks to local CCT tourism supply. In this respect, these studies depart from nature-culture or nature-society dichotomy, typical for Anglo-American research on CCT. However, this departure from the dichotomy is highly evident in the current research on natural resource management in social sciences and Anthropocene research (i.e. beyond CCT studies).

Ethnicity, as a locality element, is an integral part of the CCT products and attractions. However, in the Finnish context it has a very particular focus on the Sami culture and its role in tourism (Saarinen, 2006). Furthermore, the responsibility and sustainability of CCT is integrated to the ethnicity dimension per se (Saarinen, 2023). However, this is not the case with the general offer of CCT products and attractions. Mällinen and Sarkki (2014), for example, investigates how local people (sámi and non-sámi) experienced problems concerning culturally sustainable tourism including unwanted changes in possibilities for everyday doing in the nature. In this respect, the theme is connected with the nature-culture integration in the Finnish CCT products and attractions. In addition, the Kalevala (the national epos) and related Finnish ethnicity has been recently discussed in the Finnish CCT literature (Pulkkinen et al., 2023).

The planning and management theme of CCT is characterized by a sustainable tourism development approach (Veijola, 2023). Furthermore, there is a policy and governance emphasis (Saarinen, 2023; Veijola & Kyyrö, 2020). Furthermore, Veijola and Kyyrö (2020) have analysed existing social and natural scientific methods for measuring and monitoring the impacts of tourism in sustainability management context. There is also visible criticism towards a growth-oriented development model of CCT (and tourism, in general) (see Veijola, 2023). The arts and artistic work theme has an integral connection to creative tourism (Jokela et al., 2021). The research element, however, is dominated by art projects and products descriptions that are interesting, but which would benefit from deeper CCT insights.

Finally, the producer and consumer perspectives in CCT represent a typical research focus on business and/or visitor views and needs. Ylätalo and Virtanen (2007) studied cultural consumption among tourists with an aim to examine tourists' cultural consumption patterns and their association with tourists' socioeconomic characteristics. Grahn (2021) focused on cultural heritage entrepreneurship with an emphasis on co-operation among other local actors. This network governance perspective would empower to build an identity of the place in developing CCT in RRAs (Grahn, 2021).

What has changed in CCT in RRA in recent years (major trends).

Based on the relatively limited academic materials in Finnish it is challenging to make solid interpretations on what has changed in CCT in RRA in recent years. However, one key dimension can be identified: CCT planning and management emphasis with a strong sustainable tourism development approach. Since 1990s sustainable tourism has been a major trend in tourism and CCT research. Recently, however, the policy and governance aspects of CCT have been highlighted (Saarinen, 2023; Veijola & Kyyro, 2020; Veijola, 2023) beyond the Sámi culture and ethnicity aspects (Mällinen & Sarkki, 2014; Saarinen, 2006). What this means is that localities per se need to have a right to define what kind of CCT and how much they experience.

4.2.4   Conclusions on the Baltic macro-region

Although maritime heritage seems to be an obvious priority in the Baltic region, relatively few specific initiatives highlighting maritime resources were evident in the literature. There is some attention for Viking heritage in Denmark, where several archaeological sites, museums and 'iconic attractions' have been developed. These include the Jelling Monuments, Trelleborg Fortress, Roskilde Viking Ship Museum, Ribe Viking Centre and Ladby Viking Museum (https://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/things-do/history/viking-sites), mostly in RRA.

There is particular concern for sustainability issues, with water quality, wildlife and climate change mitigation being pillars of the Baltic macro-regional strategy. These issues do not seem closely connected to the CCT literature in the CROCUS database, however. This may reflect a division between 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage that is also evident in many studies in Baltic region that focus on rural tourism and activities in nature rather than cultural tourism per se. There is also very little attention paid to creative tourism, although Björn and Lüthje (2023) do indicate the potential of developing nature-based creative tourism in Lapland.

There is also potential for connections with the creative industries, particularly gastronomy. The 'new Nordic cuisine' (originally led by Danish chef Claus Meyer) has also been developed in many rural areas. This movement also has strong cultural links, as stated in the original aim to "promote Nordic products and the variety of Nordic producers - and to spread the word about their underlying cultures." (Nordic Kitchen Manifesto, 2004). The Nordic cuisine movement is also based on creating links with a wide range of stakeholders "To join forces with consumer representatives, other cooking craftsmen, agriculture, fishing, food, retail and wholesale industries, researchers, teachers, politicians and authorities on this project for the benefit and advantage of everyone in the Nordic countries." This provides the potential for new governance models to link regions and sectors, as well as providing a focus for co-creation between local producers and visitors.

New Nordic Cuisine also highlights the seasonality of produce, which can become a means of overcoming an important challenge in Baltic tourism, namely the short summer season. There is a need to develop innovative business models that provide experiences at different times of the year. There is potential in this direction with the development of sauna and wellness tourism, indigenous tourism with the Sámi and creative experiences related to crafts.

4.3   Danube (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia)

The Danube macro-region is characterised by a diversity of cultures strung out along the river, with a total population of 115 million. It includes 14 countries: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine. The macro-regional strategy includes four pillars: Connecting the region; Protecting the environment; Building prosperity, and; Strengthening the region. The building prosperity pillar includes the aim "to promote culture, tourism and people to people contacts". This involves many actions related to CCT, including developing cultural routes, supporting green tourism and sustaining cultural heritage. The Council of Europe (2020) argues: "Cultural heritage therefore has a strong potential for transnational co-operation in the region. It is an important component of tourism, which contributes to economic growth in the region." (p. 40).

CROCUS partners in the Danube region include ZRI in Bulgaria, the University of Rijeka in Croatia, Pannonia University in Hungary and Maribor University in Slovenia.

4.3.1   Cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Bulgaria

Introduction: Trends and themes in scientific research 2010-2023

Cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Bulgaria is an emerging field that highlights the intersection of heritage preservation, local development, and tourism. By analysing various studies, this literature review aims to identify key themes and trends in research activity in this field. The study employed a mixed-method approach (content analysis, including frequency count and crosstabulation) and was conducted in several key stages:

1. Compilation of relevant publications: A comprehensive search was performed on Google Scholar, Academia.edu and ResearchGate using keywords in both Bulgarian and English, such as "cultural tourism," "creative tourism," "rural and remote areas," and "Bulgaria." Some other key words were also used, such as: "heritage", "festival", "local culture", etc. in order to go deeper and find more relevant papers, which do not explicitly mention "cultural tourism". Additionally, conference proceedings published in Bulgarian and focused on cultural heritage and/or cultural tourism were reviewed. This resulted in a list of 38 publications from the period 2010-2023.
2. Open coding: The full texts of the collected publications were manually coded to identify leading themes using MaxQDA2020 software. This was coupled with frequency count to identify the most prominent themes.
3. In-depth thematic and trend analysis: In addition to the frequency and in-depth qualitative analysis of themes, the relationship between the year of publication and the topics covered was explored, using the Crosstab function in MaxQDA2020.

Themes and trends

Despite the limited number of observations spanning the 12-year period, the distribution of publications provides some insights into research activity related to cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Bulgaria. Analysing the data from Figure 1, we observe that the initial years had minimal studies, indicating a relatively slow interest in the topic. However, there was a visible increase in publications during 2013 and 2014, with four publications each year. Subsequently, the trend fluctuated, but 2021 stood out with the highest number of publications (eight), followed by a decline in 2022 and 2023. Overall, the last six years have seen a slightly rising interest in this field, accounting for 63% of all publications.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of the number of publications over 2010-2023 in Bulgaria
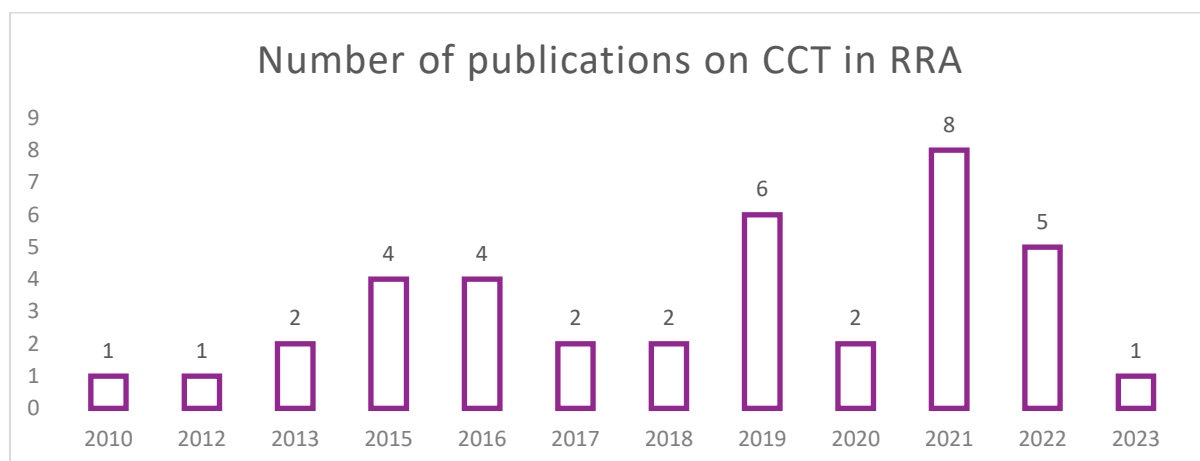
The content analysis revealed 12 distinct topics characteristic of cultural and creative tourism research in rural and remote areas of Bulgaria. Among these, cultural heritage, the valorisation of cultural heritage, regional development, and sustainability emerged as the most prominent ones.

Table 4.2: Frequency of occurrence of themes (total percent of documents and Crosstab for the 2010-2017/2018-2023 periods)

Themes	2010-2017	2018-2023	Total 2010-2023
Cultural heritage	57,1%	91,7%	78,95%
unspecified	7,1%	4,2%	5,26%
tangible heritage	35,7%	37,5%	36,84%
intangible heritage	21,4%	50,0%	39,47%
biocultural heritage/cultural landscape	0	4,2%	2,63%
social practices, rituals, and festive events	7,1%	0	2,63%
crafts	14,3%	4,2%	7,89%
myths and legends	0	4,2%	2,63%
food and wine	21,4%	37,5%	31,58%
Valorisation of Cultural Heritage	50,0%	62,5%	57,89%
Regional development	28,6%	20,8%	23,68%
Sustainability	28,6%	20,8%	23,68%
Local identity formation	7,1%	16,7%	13,16%
Creative tourism	28,6%	0	10,53%
Creative industries	21,4%	0	7,89%
Stakeholder collaboration	0	12,5%	7,89%
Cultural destination competitiveness	0	8,3%	5,26%
Cultural heritage management	7,1%	0	2,63%

Social and cultural impacts of tourism	0	4,2%	2,63%
Branding	7,1%	0	2,63%

Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage and cultural tourism are closely intertwined, as cultural heritage serves as the primary resource for developing cultural tourism. The findings from this study confirm this general observation: cultural heritage is identified as a major or secondary theme in nearly 80% of the publications. Overall, there is a balance in the number of studies dedicated to the two main categories of cultural heritage – tangible and intangible – recorded in 37% and 38% of all cases, respectively. In recent years, there has been a surge in research interest in intangible cultural heritage. From 2018 to 2023, its share as a topic has significantly increased, accounting for 50% of all publications in this timeframe.

The term "tangible heritage" generally refers to "all the material traces such as archaeological sites, historical monuments, artifacts, and objects that are significant to a community, a nation, or/and humanity" (Hassan, 2014). In Bulgaria, studies on tangible heritage predominantly focus on Roman archaeological sites, often exploring their tourism potential and sustainable methods and strategies for incorporating them into the tourism offerings (Stefanova, 2022; Bokova 2021).

Intangible heritage, on the other hand, encompasses "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2003). This category has seen a noticeable increase in research interest in Bulgaria in the last few years.

Although not officially listed as a separate sub-category, food and wine are integral aspects of intangible cultural heritage, especially in rural areas (Bessière, 1998). In this study, they were identified as the most popular sub-category, appearing in nearly one-third of all publications and accounting for 75% of the intangible heritage category. Most studies on wine tourism adopt a business and management perspective, focusing on regional development through the creation of cross-industry clusters (Atanasov, 2021; Dimitrova, 2019) and themed routes (Dimitrov & Dimitrova, 2015). In contrast, food tourism studies tend to take an anthropological approach, exploring the valorisation of traditional cuisine (Ganeva-Raycheva et al., 2019; Stoilova, 2021) and its role in shaping local identity (Radoynova, 2022).

Compared to food and wine, other types of intangible heritage are underrepresented in cultural tourism research in Bulgaria. There are only three publications discussing traditional crafts, primarily focusing on their role as cultural tourism resources (Alexova, 2019, Terziyska, 2013). Two intriguing but under-represented themes are myths and legends (Damyanova, 2018), viewed as sources of creative storytelling, and biocultural heritage. The latter is described as "a complex system of interdependent elements that express the relationship between local communities and the surrounding natural environment" (Ganeva-Raycheva, 2021, p. 234), a concept more widely known as cultural landscape.

The findings suggest that both tangible and intangible heritage, particularly food and wine, are significant themes in the academic discourse on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas in Bulgaria. However, other aspects like crafts, social practices and rituals, myths and legends (oral heritage), biocultural heritage, and cultural landscape are less frequently discussed. This could indicate areas for further exploration in future research.

Valorisation of cultural heritage

Although widely discussed in scientific research, the valorisation of cultural heritage still lacks a clear definition and can be understood in at least two distinct ways. The first interpretation emphasises the significance attributed to a cultural heritage resource. In contrast, the second involves deliberate

actions to make a cultural asset useful, often with the aim of producing surplus value (Rech, 2022). Despite these contrasting perspectives, both interpretations converge on the idea that valorisation involves not merely conserving cultural heritage but treating it as a valuable resource that can be sustainably managed and leveraged for cultural, economic, social, scientific, and political purposes (Wiegand et al., n.d.). In this regard, it is no surprise that many of the publications on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas in Bulgaria are dedicated to this topic. In addition, the valorisation of cultural heritage is not only the second most popular topic but also among those that have enjoyed increasing interest in recent years (Table 1).

Some of the main sub-topics regarding the valorisation of cultural heritage found in the publications include the evaluation of tourist potential (Stefanova, 2022; Toskov & Yaneva, 2020; Alexova, 2020), heritage preservation (Velev, 2017; Gurkova and Galev, 2015), and themed routes as a tool for valorising wine and winemaking (Terziyska, 2022). Additionally, festivals are highlighted as a key tool for the valorisation of traditions and intangible cultural heritage, as they enhance the value of cultural heritage resources, promote local pride, and generate positive economic impacts (Stoilova, 2017).

The role of the local population in the valorisation process is a primary focus in most publications. Engaging the local community is deemed essential for the selection and development of cultural heritage; without this, these efforts would not succeed, regardless of the scientific value of the heritage or the intentions of external stakeholders to influence the situation (Bokova, 2021).

Regional development

The valorisation of cultural heritage is closely linked to regional development, a theme present in about one-fifth of the publications. The common perception is that developing tourism potential creates new opportunities for tourism and economic growth in the country's least developed areas. Some publications review available resources and propose various strategies and initiatives, such as creating themed routes (Alexova, 2020; Dimitrov & Dimitrova, 2015), launching low-budget events like plein airs and workshops (Alexova, 2020), and developing entirely new tourist attractions (Alexova, 2020).

Successful local development, as most authors suggest, relies on the collaboration of various stakeholders through clusters (Dimitrov & Dimitrova, 2015). A limited number of publications also explore the potential of creative industries for sustainable regional development (Stoyanov, 2016). The proposed strategic approach involves fostering clusters of creative industries and cultural tourism, supported by incubators. Moreover, implementing well-defined policies to rejuvenate creative endeavours in villages with growth potential and integrating them into cultural routes can create appealing employment opportunities for young individuals and attract fresh talent (Shishmanova & Stoyanov, 2015).

Challenges to regional development in rural and remote areas encompass several factors. These include inadequate transport accessibility, limited destination appeal, underdeveloped tourism industry, and a scarcity of skilled personnel. Furthermore, there is often untapped potential in natural and cultural resources, which may be hoarded, and small settlements face the risk of depopulation (Shopova et al., 2016).

Sustainability

At first glance, sustainable tourism development appears to be a well-represented theme in the publications, identified in nearly a fifth of them. However, a closer analysis reveals that it is often treated as a secondary topic, typically linked to regional development, which is labelled as sustainable without a clear definition or concrete proposals and case studies. Of course, there are some exceptions. For instance, Ganeva-Raycheva's study on the valorisation of biocultural heritage provides several examples of how this process leads to economic, ecological, social, and cultural benefits for local communities. The case studies demonstrate how valorisation can be used as a tool for protecting biodiversity through the preservation of traditional knowledge, skills, and experiences, at the same

time supporting local economic development, creating employment, and promoting ecologically adaptive agriculture (Ganeva-Raycheva, 2021).

Local identity

Local identity is among the less popular themes in scientific research on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas in Bulgaria and is mainly discussed in publications from the fields of anthropology and ethnology. Some of them showcase how events celebrating local foods connect products and technological know-how with specific regions, arguing that these events add value to traditional foods, transforming them into markers of local identity and potential commercial products (Stoilova, 2021). Others explore the strategies and major obstacles related to recognising heritage within local communities and integrating it as a crucial element of local identity (Bokova, 2021).

Creative tourism and creative industries

Research on creative tourism and its related topic, creative industries, is relatively scarce, accounting for only about a tenth of the available publications. Furthermore, the trend indicates diminishing interest, as all of these studies date back to before 2017. Publications on this topic are usually focused on the opportunities for utilising existing resources for the creation of creative tourism offerings, with some of them making an in-depth comparison between cultural tourism and the creative tourism business models (Ohridska-Olson & Ivanov, 2010).

Less explored themes

The content analysis revealed several intriguing topics that, despite their significance, remain underrepresented in existing publications and therefore need more attention:

- *Social and cultural impacts of tourism in rural and remote areas:* Understanding how tourism affects local communities and ecosystems in less accessible areas is crucial for sustainable development.
- *Cultural destination competitiveness:* Examining the factors that contribute to a destination's competitiveness in terms of creating memorable tourism experiences while adhering to the principles of sustainable development.
- *Cultural heritage management:* Effective strategies for preserving and promoting cultural heritage sites and artifacts.
- *Stakeholder collaboration:* Exploring collaborative approaches involving various stakeholders (e.g., government, local communities, businesses) to enhance cultural tourism outcomes.
- *Branding in cultural and creative tourism:* Investigating how branding influences tourists' perceptions and choices related to cultural destinations.

Key findings

Despite the limited number of observations spanning a 12-year period, the distribution of publications provides insights into research activity related to cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Bulgaria. The last six years have seen a rising interest in this field, accounting for 63% of all publications. Themes that have gained increased attention include intangible heritage (especially food and wine), valorisation of cultural heritage, stakeholder collaboration, and local identity formation. Conversely, creative tourism, traditional crafts, and social practices and rituals have experienced a decline in popularity.

In terms of research themes, the following areas have been significant:

- *Cultural Heritage:* Cultural heritage is a major theme, identified in nearly 80% of the publications, with a balance between tangible (37%) and intangible (38%) cultural heritage. Studies on tangible heritage predominantly focus on archaeological sites, exploring their tourism potential and sustainable strategies for incorporating them into tourism offerings.

- *Food and wine* is the most researched sub-category of intangible cultural heritage. Wine tourism studies usually adopt a business perspective, while food tourism studies explore traditional cuisine and its role in shaping local identity. Other aspects like crafts, social practices, myths and legends (oral heritage), and biocultural heritage are less frequently discussed, indicating areas for further exploration in future research.
- *Valorisation of cultural heritage* is widely discussed and involves treating cultural heritage as a valuable resource that can be sustainably managed and leveraged for various purposes. Engaging the local community is seen as essential for successful valorisation.
- *Regional development* is often seen as an outcome of valorisation. Proposed strategies include creating themed routes, launching events, and establishing new tourist attractions. Collaboration among stakeholders is frequently emphasised.
- *Sustainable tourism development* is also frequently mentioned, albeit as a secondary topic. Several case studies demonstrate how valorisation can protect biodiversity and support local economic development.
- *Local identity* is explored in publications from the anthropology and ethnology fields. Events celebrating local foods are found to connect products with specific regions, adding value to traditional foods and transforming them into markers of local identity.

In contrast to this, less explored themes include creative tourism (even diminishing in recent years), social and cultural impacts of tourism, cultural destination competitiveness, cultural heritage management, stakeholder collaboration, branding, and cultural landscape merit further exploration.

4.3.2 CTT in RRAs in Croatia

Croatia falls into both the Danube region (the inland area of the country), and the Adriatic and Ionian region (which is considered below). An extensive analysis of the implications of the Danube macro-region strategy for the county was provided by Demonja (2012). Demonja argues "Croatia's place in the Danube Strategy is the realization of new possibilities and potentials for strengthening the economy, regional cooperation and infrastructure development" (p. 113). However, he noted a lack of previous research on tourism and culture in the context of the Danube macro-region, even though tourism is among the main development priorities of the Croatian Danube Region.

Croatia only has a short stretch of the Danube River, with 188 km mainly marking the border between Croatia and Serbia. The Danube area is mostly rural, with Vukovar being the only major town (30,000 inhabitants). Croatian tourism policy focusses on the coast, with the inland areas being linked to cultural tourism and particularly rural tourism. There are many family farms producing wine, which supports the development of wine routes in inland Croatia. Demonja (2012) also mentions the rich cultural heritage of the region, especially archaeological; a rich ethnological heritage; customs, traditional performances/manifestations and gastronomy as resources for the development of cultural tourism.

The Croatian Danube region lacks UNESCO World Heritage Sites, although it does have manifestations of intangible heritage, including transhumance, gingerbread making, wooden toys, lace and a bell-ringing pageant linked to Carnival. There are also a number of Interreg projects that have stimulated collaboration in cultural tourism between Croatia and Hungary. Croatia has also applied to have the Danubian Limes (or Roman frontier) listed as World Heritage. The Living Danube Limes is a cross-border project involving partners from Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and the Republic of Moldova. There are plans to create a European Cultural Route on the basis of the Limes, and activities such as reconstructing a Roman ship have been considered (https://www.iarh.hr/en/research/international-projects/living-danube-limes/).

Demonja and Gredičak (2014) explore the links between sustainable and cultural tourism in Croatia, concluding that there is a relative lack of research on the development of cultural tourism overall. This

is in spite of a national Development Strategy of Cultural Tourism, which recognises cultural diversity and national and local cultural resources as key selling points. They conclude that progress has been made with the strategic aims of creating a positive environment for the development of cultural-tourism products and increasing the quality of cultural tourism products. Even so, there are issues in terms of governance due to changes in governmental responsibilities related to tourism and culture (Demonja & Gredičak, 2014), which in turn has limited the development potential of cultural tourism.

In terms of the development of intangible heritage, Horjan (2011) reports on the project CRAFTATTRACT (Traditional crafts as a new attraction for cultural tourism), which was implemented by the Museums of Hrvatsko Zagorje and Slovenian partners. There has also been tourism collaboration across the border with Hungary in the Drava region (Marton, Raffay, Varga Szalai, Barcza & Gonda, 2021).

The overall picture that emerges from the analysis of the Croatian literature related to CCT in the Danube macro-region is that relatively little attention has been paid to this area, in spite of well-developed national policies relating the cultural tourism.

The analysis of the Croatian literature is also continued in the section covering the Adriatic and Ionian region, to which Croatia also belongs.

4.3.3 Literature review of relevant academic work of Hungarian scholars

The literature produced in Hungarian or by Hungarian scholars in English concentrate on four main areas: 1) destination development, 2) cross-border initiatives, 3) product development, and 4) changes in visitors' demand in the consequent challenges. The key themes are presented here according to these categories however, there are some overlaps. Most of the articles and book chapters discuss concrete case studies, only a few of them provide a more thorough theoretical background, for instance discussing Buhalis's 6As of destinations, the foundations of cultural tourism or factors fostering the development of clusters.

Destination development

The articles in this category discuss primarily how various cultural assets can contribute to destination development. Suggestions include combining natural and cultural resources to develop destinations with a diverse offer, exploiting the potential in craft products, and emphasizing the need for stakeholder involvement in tourism development.

- Szigetköz: the study discusses the role of creative industries and also points out the importance of natural resources in the Szigetköz border region. It provides a lengthy literature review and presents the results of 14 interviews conducted with local stakeholders envisioning the future of the region.
- Tolna county: the article explores the cultural-based economic development possibilities; focusing on the market of craft goods, handmade and folklore art products.
- Pécs and South-Western Region: the research focuses on the role of culture as a flagship in the tourism of Pécs and its area. The aim of the article is to encourage stakeholders of tourism development in the area to implement concrete acts in cultural tourism development.
- Mura National Park: the study applies the 6A model of Buhalis on the case study area and concludes that a destination management organization could play a key role in tourism development and in strengthening the region through tourism.
- Dráva region: the authors analyse the reasons behind the lack of success of tourism development in the area despite the significant amount of support mechanisms that the region enjoyed in the recent past.

Cross-border development

The literature published on cross-border development focuses on the impacts of cross-border collaboration, with special attention to the economic benefits, and some reference to social impacts. Potential forms of development, such as creating thematic routes are identified. Furthermore, based on the assessment of projects carried out between 2007 and 2013 along the Austria-Hungary border regions, success factors of cross-border projects are identified as keeping deadlines within the timeframe of the project, project management success indicating achieving the objectives of the project, and reaching and involving the target groups of the project. Perceived problems and challenges are detected, including ineffective communication and not being able to fully exploit networking potentials.

- Cross-border cooperation programmes: the article assesses cross-border cooperation programmes focusing on tourism development.
- Slovakian-Hungarian border: besides other positive impacts of cross-border tourism and economy, this study provides an insight into the results of Ister-Granum EGTC inventory as well, incorporating village tourism, cultural tourism and spa-development as well.
- Serbian-Hungarian border: this research assesses EU-supported tourism related cross-border projects, based on literature and interviews – the results show less increase in development, however, without the support the smaller settlements would have less alternatives for development.
- Cross-border thematic routes: it emphasises the role of thematic routes in creating positive economic impact, with the aim of summarizing the economic and touristic features of peripheral regions.
- Slovakian-Hungarian border (Szigetköz-Csallóköz): the study focuses on the cross-border development possibilities facilitated by water level regulation. It has two main aspects: in-depth analysis of strategic documents, and interviews with decision-makers and institutional leaders of different municipalities. The aim is to determine concrete development possibilities.
- Croatian-Hungarian border: focusing on the impacts of initiatives implemented in the 2007-2013 planning period, the article examines the level of the impacts and the future of the (naturally existing) cooperation.
- Hungarian-Slovakian border: the main aspect of this paper are the achieved results and the regional aspects of the 2007-2013 planning period. As a main finding the author concludes that there are regional differences in the number of implemented projects, indicating that more developed regions submitted more project proposals, and are more successful in the implementation as well. The study emphasizes the need to improve communication between public actors and the people living in the border areas, in order to ensure balance in development.
- INTERREG Hungarian-Slovak border: the study analyses the failures and problems of the INTERREG programme in relation to the low number of successful cross-border projects (in connection with cultural heritage) at the Hungarian-Slovak border. As a result, the authors propose integrated cross-border development of the cultural industry.
- De-bordering – cross-bordering: this paper focuses on the economic and social aspects of Hungary's de-bordering, in terms of cross-border relationships and cooperation.
- Cross-border networking potential: the paper explores the factors why the Hungarian (and cross-border) partners utilised only partially the networking potentials in the 2007-2013 programming period.
- Success factors of 3 cross-border projects: the authors aimed to identify those factors that are similar or very similar in case of the three well-operating projects leading to successful project implementation.

Product development

This category summarizes descriptions and discussions of well-established forms of cultural tourism products as well as alternative forms of product development which can respond to the changes in customer demand. Food is mentioned as a central element of product development, and the role of thematic routes in preserving traditions is emphasised. Adapting the philosophy of slow tourism, building on unique features and the potential in ecotourism are identified as alternative ways of developing cultural and creative products.

- Food festivals, food tourism: the study examines the online representation of food festivals (in Europe and Northern America); concluding that the commitment to the local food and traditions, and there is growing support from local producers and service providers of the festivals.
- Escape rooms: gamification is used in a creative and innovative way in product development related to urban tourism – authors analyse the international competitiveness and position of the Budapest leisure room market.
- Network of small historic Austrian towns: as a best practice for similar sized towns, an Austrian example of cooperation of historic towns is introduced in this paper, aiming to strengthen the cultural attractions of the area.
- Back to the routes: what is cultural tourism? The aim of the paper is to provide an introduction into the tourism segments and attraction structure. The study also incorporates a case study of the cultural tourism offer in a European city.
- Clusters: the study provides a thorough insight to the general national and region-specific factors that foster the creation of clusters, and examines three clusters in the South Transdanubian Region, operating mainly in the field of cultural tourism.

Alternative and new ways of product development

- Slow tourism in small towns: the aim of the paper is to present the slow philosophy and how it can be applied; and argues that slow tourism should be integrated into the future development of settlements.
- Thematic routes and Hungaricums: this article highlights the role of thematic routes in preserving local heritage and values, involving local communities.
- Eco/rural tourism: the study analyses ecotourism as a tool for local development and involvement as a bottom-up initiative; and introduces the Greenway initiative of the South Transdanubian Region.

Changes and challenges in demand

Articles in this category unveil some of the recent changes in tourist demand which impact on the success of cultural tourism development and suggest creative ideas as the way forward to be able to attract a wider range of audiences. The studies emphasize that modernisation is a must for attraction development, however, lack of financial resources can hinder such initiatives. Younger audiences clearly expect modern and creative approaches to culture, while value co-creation enhances the touristic experience for all segments.

- Changing needs of demand: the aim of the paper is to reveal the changing needs that make the traditional development methods unsuccessful or ineffective in the case of cultural tourism; including a consumer survey and secondary analysis of statistics. As conclusions, the authors determine the lack of money (regarding attraction modernisation), and the lack of younger generations' interest in traditional cultural tourism products.
- Value co-creation in tourism: creative tourism, as the active way of consuming products in tourism is based on the principles and added value of co-creation in tourism.

- Rural gentrification: the study presents the rural gentrification in 126 settlements (with less than 2000 inhabitants), out of which in 60 gentrification is related to (mainly) waterfront tourism, at Lake Balaton. However, the authors point out that in many cases, gentrification does not have significant influence on the socio-economic survival of settlements.

4.3.4 Slovenia

Although Slovenia is formally listed as part of the Danube macro-region, it does not lie on the river. Instead, it has the River Sava, an important tributary of the Danube, and close cross-border links to other Danube macro-region countries. Slovenia is therefore formally included in the Danube macro-region (as well as the Adriatic and Ionian and Alpine regions). However, there is almost no research linking Slovenia to the rest of the Danube region in terms of CCT in RRA.

For more analysis of the CCT literature in RRA for Slovenia, see the relevant sections in the Alpine (Section 4.4) and Adriatic and Ionian (Section 4.5) regions.

4.3.5 Conclusions on the Danube macro-region

There is not much literature on creative tourism in the Danube region. In contrast to many other areas, a decline in creative tourism research was noted in Bulgaria (but this may be due to the relatively early development of this field there. New strategies to link the creative and tourism industries may change this situation in future.

Food is an important cultural resource for the development of tourism experiences in the region. There are numerous food festivals in the region, and wine-related tourism is also well developed. The style of food-related cultural tourism here tends to be different from the Nordic model, with an emphasis on traditional food and collective food consumption.

There have been a number of attempts to involve the local population in cultural tourism development. A lack of interest in cultural heritage is noted in Hungary, which may reflect the overall focus on the historic role of heritage. This positioning is also reflected in the suggestion by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2020) to use the theme 'prehistoric heritage' for cultural tourism development in the Danube macro-region.

In contrast to the Baltic macro-region, sustainability has not been a major focus of research, although many significant sustainability issues are also evident here. The most evident is the health of the Danube River itself. The Danube Tourism Laboratories (DaTuLabs) project is designed "to improve sustainability and resilience in the tourism sector in the Danube Region through systematic, timely, and regular monitoring of tourism performance and its impact on sustainable growth." But this project is still being developed. There are also many projects related to transport and communications, given the problems of linking together 10 countries along the river.

There are many cross-border CCT studies in the Danube region, but the overall impression is that most projects are beset by significant challenges. Stakeholder involvement is seen as crucial, particularly in cross-border initiatives and cultural routes.

4.4 Alpine (Italy, Slovenia)

The Alpine macro-region has a population of 80 million people in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland. The region is characterized by mountainous terrain and challenges of accessibility. The CROCUS members involved with this macro-region are the University of Bergamo in Italy and the University of Maribor in Slovenia.

The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) (European Commission, 2015) probably has the most ties with the rural of all the macro-regional strategies. The Alpine macro-region has a very high rate of internal migration, predominantly from rural or remote areas to urban centres. This trend is exacerbated in mountainous areas where fewer job opportunities are available, reflecting issues of remoteness in many Alpine areas. However, the EUSALP also highlights opportunities in food products and services based on agriculture and forestry.

The action plan for the EUSALP strategy includes the development of new tourism models, as "the mission is to strengthen sustainable Alpine tourism, to force innovation and to bring new inputs for development and promote joint strategies in the furthering of knowledge in Alpine tourism." (European Commission, 2015 p. 16). Unlike the other macro-regions, Alpine tourism strategy is not specifically linked to culture or heritage, reflecting the perception of the region as a predominantly natural landscape.

4.4.1   Synthesis of the Literature Review on CCT in RRA in Italy

This literature review explores the state of the art in the academic debate on Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas in Italy. The search was confined to Italian-language sources to encapsulate the specific features of the scientific debate on CCT in RRA in the Italian context. The review focused on three main objectives: 1) Assessing the number of contributions that have addressed this topic so far, 2) Identifying the key topics and disciplinary angles used to explore it, and 3) Exploring the evolution of this debate over time.

Methodology

A thorough literature search was conducted using different scientific databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The search strategy incorporated queries in both English and Italian. The English query was formulated as follows: "remote region" OR "remote area" OR "rural area" OR "rural region" AND "cultural tourism" OR "creative tourism." Correspondingly, the Italian query was: "turismo culturale" OR "turismo creativo" AND "area rurale" OR "area marginale" OR "regione marginale."

Post initial retrieval, selection was made to focus only on publications written in Italian. Each identified source was initially assessed based on its abstract, evaluating its relevance to the thematic constructs of cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote Italian settings. In instances where an abstract was unavailable, a comprehensive review of the main text was undertaken. This review focused on the frequency and contextual relevance of the predefined search keywords. Following this evaluation, 132 sources were selected for in-depth analysis. This corpus included 105 sources from Google Scholar (comprising articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings), 5 from Scopus, and 22 from Web of Science.

Subsequent to the selection process, a comprehensive analysis of the sources was conducted. This phase was pivotal in discerning the various disciplinary perspectives and methodological frameworks employed across the studies. Further scrutiny was directed towards the primary topics addressed by the literature, with a particular focus on the case studies addressed in the material. These were analyzed for the nature of cultural and creative tourism activities and their specific geographical settings within Italy.

Overview of the analyzed sources

The review comprised a total of 132 sources categorized into three main types: articles, books and book chapters, and proceedings papers. The majority of the sources were articles, totalling 97, followed by 19 books and book chapters, and 16 proceedings papers.

The temporal distribution of the sources spans from 1986 to 2024, with a noticeable increase in publications over the last decade. Notably, the years 2015 and 2018 saw the highest number of publications, with 15 and 14 sources respectively, reflecting a growing academic interest in CCT in rural

and remote areas of Italy during these periods. The years 2020 and 2023 also demonstrated significant scholarly output, with 12 and 13 sources respectively, possibly driven by renewed interest in local tourism due to global travel restrictions.

Figure 4.3: Temporal distribution of the published sources
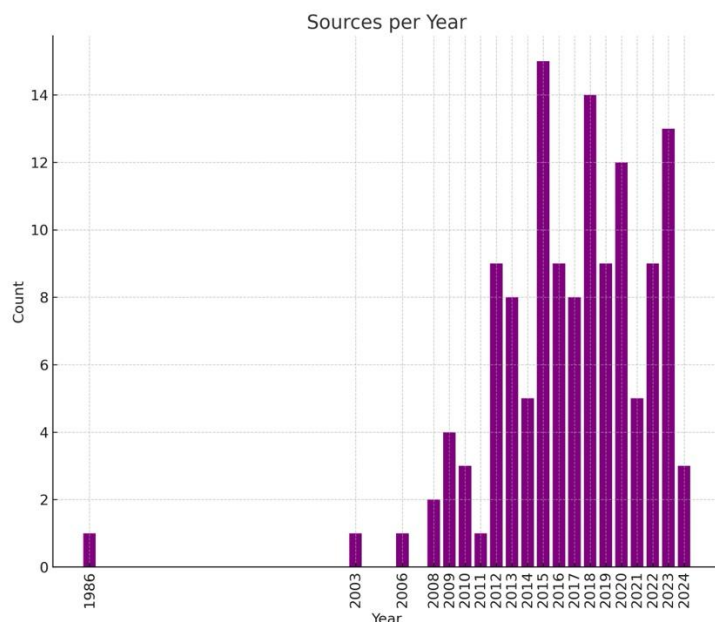
The sources were published in a wide array of academic journals, indicating the interdisciplinary nature of CCT research. *Annali del Turismo* and *Bollettino dell Associazione Italiana di Cartografia* were the most frequent publication venues, with 12 and 10 articles respectively. Other notable journals included *Il Capitale culturale*, *Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage* and *Geotema*. The diversity of journals—from cultural studies and geography to more specialized journals on tourism and regional development—emphasizes the multifaceted research approaches to CCT in rural and remote settings.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Articles Across Journals
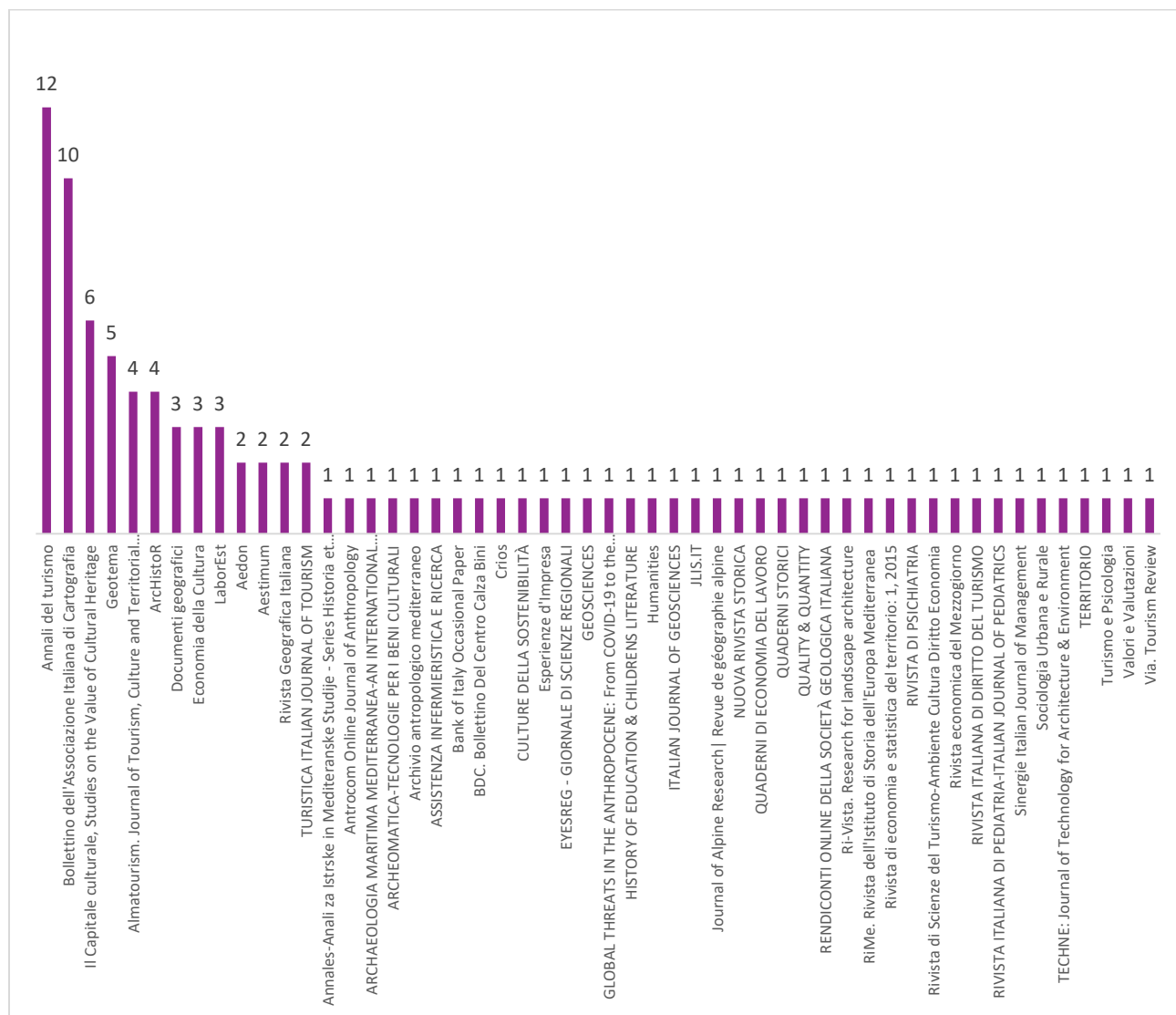
Keywords and thematic clusters

In the examination of the keywords, certain terms exhibit a higher frequency of mention. The keywords with the highest frequency include Tourism (44 mentions), Cultural Tourism (15 mentions), Local Development (15 mentions), Sustainable Development (14 mentions), Cultural Heritage (12 mentions), Rural Areas/Inner Areas (12 mentions).

The clustering of keywords into thematic groups helps in understanding the multi-dimensional aspects of the subject matter.

- Tourism and Travel: This cluster combines general tourism with specialized forms like sustainable, creative, and experiential tourism, underscoring the diverse approaches to travel and its implications.
- Cultural and Historical Heritage: Focused on the preservation, education, and promotion of cultural and historical assets. This cluster includes activities and strategies like living history events, religious itineraries, and heritage education, emphasizing the role of culture in community identity and tourism.
- Environmental and Geographic Focus: Encompasses keywords related to environmental education, conservation, and geographic studies. It reflects concerns with climate change,

rural development, and naturalistic tourism, highlighting the intersection of geography, environment, and sustainable practices.

- Social and Economic Development: Captures keywords related to social policies, economic strategies, and developmental frameworks. This includes discussions on social capital, local development, and sustainable economic practices, pointing towards efforts to foster equitable and sustained growth.
- Planning and Architecture: Focuses on the design, planning, and utilization of urban and rural spaces. This includes considerations of public spaces, architectural heritage, and the role of design in enhancing community life.
- Agriculture and Rural Management: Deals with agricultural practices, rural planning, and land management, indicating a focus on sustainable agricultural practices and the management of rural landscapes for economic and environmental benefits.
- Technology and Innovation: Encompasses the role of new technologies and innovative practices in enhancing various domains such as storytelling, tourism, and community engagement.

Main topics and study areas

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 provide a detailed overview of the research landscape on cultural and creative tourism in Italy, highlighting both the thematic areas of focus and the specific regions where these studies have been conducted.

Research topics in cultural and creative tourism in Italy span a wide array of areas, reflecting the country's rich and diverse heritage. Key areas include creative tourism, which encompasses artistic tourism, cultural itineraries, and religious tourism. Cultural and natural tourism is another major focus, covering practices such as transhumance, diffused hotels, ecotourism, geotourism, lighthouse tourism, and activities in natural parks, protected areas, and walking tourism. Cultural tourism explores archaeological sites, archeoparks, gender studies, gastronomic tourism, rural tourism, agri-food heritage, and festivals. Experiential tourism delves into the role of technology and tourism policy in enhancing tourist experiences. Participatory tourism emphasizes engaging tourists in local activities and decision-making processes. Rural tourism includes agro-cultural itineraries, while tourism policy focuses on tools for tourism enhancement.

Table 4.3: Main topics addressed in the Italian debate on CCT in RRA

Main topics	Associated topics
Creative tourism	Artistic heritage
Creative tourism	Participatory tourism
Creative tourism	Cultural itineraries
Creative tourism	Religious heritage
Cultural and natural tourism	Transhumance
Cultural and natural tourism	Diffused hotel
Cultural and natural tourism	Ecotourism
Cultural and natural tourism	Geotourism
Cultural and natural tourism	Lighthouse
Cultural and natural tourism	Natural parks

Cultural and natural tourism	Multifunctional agriculture
Cultural and natural tourism	Protected areas
Cultural and natural tourism	Walking tourism
Cultural tourism	Archaeological tourism
Cultural tourism	Archeoparks
Cultural tourism	Gender
Cultural tourism	Enogastronomy
Cultural tourism	Rural tourism
Cultural tourism	Agri-food heritage
Cultural tourism	Festival
Experiential tourism	Technology
Experiential tourism	Tourism policy
Rural tourism	Agro-cultural itineraries
Tourism policy	Tool for tourism enhancement

The research is geographically diverse, covering various regions of Italy, each with unique cultural and natural attributes. Sicilia leads with nine case studies, reflecting its rich cultural heritage, ancient history, and natural landscapes. Toscana follows with eight studies, focusing on its artistic heritage, historical cities, and scenic vineyards. Piemonte and Campania, each with seven case studies, highlight their diverse offerings, from gastronomic tourism to historical sites and vibrant cultural traditions. Regions like Puglia, Basilicata, Sud Italia, Sardegna, Umbria, and Abruzzo each have four case studies, indicating significant research interest in their unique cultural and natural features. Lombardia and Calabria, with three studies each, explore their blend of modernity and tradition. Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Emilia-Romagna, Marche, and Veneto, each with two studies, highlight their historical, cultural, and natural attractions. Less explored regions such as Molise, Trentino-Alto Adige, and Liguria. Broader studies on Nord Italia encompass various northern regions, focusing on their collective cultural and economic characteristics.

Table 4.4: Case studies on CCT in RRA in Italian regions

Region	Number of case studies
Sicilia	9
Toscana	8
Piemonte	7
Campania	7
Puglia	4
Basilicata	4
Sud Italia	4
Sardegna	4
Umbria	4

Abruzzo	4
Lombardia	3
Calabria	3
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	2
Lazio	2
Emilia-Romagna	2
Marche	2
Veneto	2
Molise	1
Trentino-Alto Adige	1
Liguria	1
Napoli	1
Nord Italia	1

What is Different about Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas in Italy?

From this preliminary analysis, we observed that most of the considered sources are related to the topic of cultural tourism and its specific subfields rather than creative tourism, as the latter term appears to be less utilized in Italian academic discourse, with only 10 sources where this topic was explicitly addressed. According to our literature review, the term "turismo creativo" was first introduced in the Italian academic debate in 2013 in the book chapter titled "La sostenibilità e la responsabilità del turismo creativo" written by Citarella and Maglio within the edited volume "Dal turismo sostenibile alla responsabilità sociale d'impresa". The book chapter aimed at outlining the main action courses for the development of creative tourism based on an integrated evaluation of the economic and territorial advantages and disadvantages, supported by an analysis of selected local and foreign best practices. These practices include the co-creation of authenticity, the increase of skills, the protection of local cultures, and a systematic approach, which are challenges to be faced to make tourism a new strategic lever for the development of creative territories.

Two other contributions seem aimed at defining the conceptual and theoretical framework of creative tourism within the Italian debate (Longo & Pennacchia, 2015; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2017). Meanwhile, other contributions on creative tourism dealt with case studies, mostly connected to rural and marginal areas of southern Italy. These studies focus on exploring the potentially crucial contribution of this form of tourism in fostering sustainable innovation (e.g., Citarella, 2015; Rabbiosi et al., 2018; Citarella, 2015; Bartar et al., 2023) and strengthening territorial identity (Scrofani & Leone, 2017).

Cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Italy is distinct due to its emphasis on leveraging local tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This includes religious tourism (e.g., Trono & Oliva, 2013; Piersanti, 2018), food and gastronomic tourism (e.g., Pollice, 2012; Friel & Maizza, 2015; Pollice et al., 2023), and architectural and artistic resources (Amodio, 2019).

Tourism in rural Italy capitalizes on the unique cultural heritage and artisanal practices of small communities. This type of tourism encourages visitors to engage with local crafts, traditional festivals, and historical sites, fostering a deeper connection with the area's cultural identity. In the current national debate, tourism has been targeted by several research projects and policy initiatives as a means to counteract the negative socioeconomic dynamics affecting inner and marginal areas of Italy

and promote sustainable development based on the deployment of resources embedded in those places.

Specific topics addressed in the Italian debate on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas include: Archeoparks tourism (Busatta, 2016); creative and cultural tourism in protected natural parks (e.g., Citarella, 2015; Barilaro, 2018); marine cultural heritage resources (Dell'Erba et al., 2018); university library heritage (Bernabè & Tinti, 2020); Albergo diffuso (Quattrociocchi & Montella, 2018); cultural tourism linked to transhumance (Magnani & Tripodi, 2024); as well as initiatives linked to the Italian regional foodscapes and traditional production such as wine (Fuschi, 2012) and oil (Calzati & de Salvo, 2017).

From a disciplinary perspective, geography has addressed this topic more consistently. Among the methods used in this research are GIS (e.g., Meini & Nocera, 2012) and cartography (e.g., Scanu & Podda, 2016), which are used to expand knowledge on the natural and cultural resources of a territory to be promoted within tourism activities (Guadagnoli, 2021).

What has changed in CCT in RRA in recent years in Italy?

The debate on cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Italy has evolved significantly over the years. Some of the main trends and developments that have shaped this academic and practical discourse are the following: sustainable tourism, digitalization, community involvement, and experiential tourism.

Sustainable tourism: One of the most prominent trends in the Italian debate on cultural and creative tourism is the shift towards sustainable tourism practices. This movement aims to explore to explore the extent to which tourism activities can diminish their environmental impact while promoting the conservation of local resources. Sustainable tourism in rural and remote areas often involves initiatives that protect natural landscapes, support biodiversity, and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Digitalization: The integration of digital technologies into the tourism sector has become increasingly prevalent, enhancing visitor experiences and streamlining operations. In rural and remote areas of Italy, digitalization has played a crucial role in making these destinations more accessible and appealing to tourists. Virtual tours and online booking systems are prime examples of how digital technologies are transforming tourism. These tools allow potential visitors to explore destinations virtually before making travel decisions, thereby increasing the visibility of rural and remote areas. Additionally, digital platforms facilitate easier access to information and services, making it more convenient for tourists to plan their trips. The adoption of digital technologies has not only improved the efficiency of tourism operations but also enriched the overall visitor experience by providing interactive and immersive opportunities.

Community Involvement: A growing emphasis on community involvement in tourism planning and decision-making processes marks another significant trend in the Italian debate. Engaging local communities ensures that tourism development aligns with the needs and values of residents, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. Community involvement can take various forms, such as participatory planning workshops, local stakeholder meetings, and initiatives that encourage residents to share their knowledge and skills with visitors. By involving local communities, tourism projects can benefit from indigenous knowledge, enhance cultural authenticity, and ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are distributed more equitably. This approach not only enhances the sustainability of tourism development but also strengthens the social fabric of rural and remote areas.

Experiential Tourism: The shift towards experiential tourism reflects a growing demand for immersive and authentic travel experiences. Visitors to rural and remote areas are increasingly seeking opportunities to engage with local culture and traditions through hands-on activities and personal interactions. Experiential tourism includes activities such as cooking classes, craft workshops, and guided tours led by locals. These experiences allow tourists to gain a deeper understanding of the local way of life, traditions, and heritage. By participating in these activities, visitors can create meaningful

connections with the places they visit and the people who live there. This trend not only enriches the visitor experience but also provides local communities with new avenues for income generation and cultural exchange.

4.4.2 CCT in RRA in Slovenia

As in Croatia, there is a distinct divide between the mountains and coastal areas in Slovenia. Whereas the coastal areas of Slovenia have relatively high levels of tourism, including many international visitors, the inland regions tend to be oriented towards domestic tourism. The coastal regions have significant built heritage of the coastal cities and fortifications.

The majority of the articles analysed below do not explicitly refer to CCT, but they do so implicitly by providing examples of such practices. Additionally, most of the articles do not focus on rural tourism per se; however, rurality is a predominant factor in the majority of the Slovenian territory as there are only two bigger cities here (Ljubljana and Maribor) – everything else can be considered as "rural".

Most articles that refer to CCT in some way date mainly to the last decade; before that, practices of CCT were not part of tourism development in a strategic way. What is evident is that this is a reflection of the wider paradigm shifts in Slovenian tourism and tourism scholarship with the active role of the tourist/visitor being emphasised as opposed to them being treated as a passive consumer. Another interesting aspect is that several articles are not the work of tourism scholars, but by anthropology experts.

The article "The Culture as a Factor in Tourism Development in the Old Town Centre of Novo mesto" (Kovač, 1996) focuses on the revitalization of old town centre of Novo mesto as a way of promoting local cultural heritage and fostering strong local cultural identity as well as the economic development of the town. The importance of collaboration of different stakeholders (local communities, government bodies, private businesses) is essential. The emphasis is on integrating cultural activities with suitable economic strategies that benefit the local economy. Public spaces and »street culture« (such as street performances and festivals) are presented as suitable elements for revitalising old town centres. CCT practices are not explicitly mentioned in the article.

The article "Heritage for the Future - Kozjansko 2000" (Simonič, 2001) discusses (creative) cultural tourism in the rural areas of Kozjansko in the Eastern part of Slovenia. It mentions organising different cultural events to boost community engagement, reinforce local identity, and promote local traditions. It addresses problems that locals face regarding tourism development in the area. It emphasises the need for a balance between leisure activities and professional engagements in promoting local cultural heritage, a need for better education and promotion, the importance of local community involvement in cultural tourism projects (for example, developing tourist infrastructure), understanding local needs (for example, job creation, infrastructure development).

The article "Along the Heritage Trails of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina" (Koščak, 2001) talks about revitalising rural areas through sustainable tourism that integrates both natural and cultural heritage. The article emphasises the importance of the local community in this development. It mentions and promotes different activities and tourist elements in this rural area, such as panoramic drives, walking trails, scenic routes, historical monuments, natural landmarks, etc. The article does not address CCT directly but emphasises the local population's crucial role in developing their region.

The article "Kapler's Mill as a Renewed Space for Activities and Gatherings" (Dolinar, 2010) addresses various ideas related to the possible revitalization of the Kapler's Mill in in rural Southeast Slovenia. It emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural heritage into the tourism offering, which would include active participation in cultural and educational activities: for example, learning about traditional milling techniques in an interactive way, allowing tourists to participate in other farming activities, or historical reenactments or by integrating local gastronomy into the tourism offering. The

article also emphasises the involvement of the local community in preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. Without mentioning the concept of CCT, the article incorporates its elements into an ideal design of tourism offer.

The article "Second Home Owners as 'the Closest Others': On How the Natives of the Trenta Valley Construct Locality through Discourse on the Second Home Phenomenon" (Vranješ, 2017) refers to CCT in rural areas in a more indirect way. The Trenta Valley is presented as an idyllic remote alpine area with traditional land use that is being contested by the phenomenon of second homeowners. This traditional way of life, agriculture, and traditional architecture present not only an important element of the locals' cultural identity but also the basis for the development of tourism in the Alpine region. The article discusses the sometimes-strained relationship between the local residents and second homeowners, with the latter being seen as "the Other" who, on one hand, help to preserve the cultural landscape, but on the other commodify cultural heritage.

The article "Transformations of (Verbal) Folklore in Contemporary Culture" (Ivančič Kutin, 2017) discusses creative cultural tourism through the folklore figure of Krivopete in the Upper Soča Valley and the Italian region of Veneto. It explores how this figure has become a part of different cultural and touristic activities in these regions. This is part of a wider trend of revitalizing folklore in contemporary culture in the form of public storytelling events, theatrical performances and local festivals, as well as guided walking tours and gastronomy. While being part of the local intangible cultural heritage, these types of creative folklore serve to enhance the cultural tourism appeal of rural regions.

The article "Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage through Local Legends of Place" (Ivančič Kutin & Kropej Telban, 2018) discusses CCT based on folktales, especially in the regions of Pohorje and central Istria where folklore forms part of the tourist. It emphasizes the importance of locating these stories within their spatial and cultural/historical contexts. All this enhances the cultural identity of the locals and presents a unique tourism experience. At the start of the 21st century, the cultural and tourist offers based on folklore have been on the rise. The article also emphasises the need for collaboration between experts from different disciplines when forming a strategy for designing such products in order to improve the tourist and cultural offer and spread the knowledge of collective creativity and heritage.

The article "Gastronomic tourism in Slovenia – from discovering, tasting and labelling to learning about the diversity of local and regional cultures" (Bogataj 2021) focuses on developing gastronomic tourism. The article mentions various culinary events (like workshops or culinary competitions for children or the combination of hiking and cuisine) and products that are tied to specific regions, such as festivals and traditional food celebrations. The number of events in which visitors can actively engage has been on the rise. Events like this play an important role in CCT, as they offer tourists an immersive experience of local traditions and lifestyles through food and can, as such, help local economies, preserve cultural heritage, promote and straighten regional identities.

The article "Cultural tourism: the role of cultural institutions in the valorisation of cultural heritage for tourism purposes" (Černelič Krošelj & Rangus, 2023) discusses various aspects of cultural tourism, including the role of cultural institutions (especially museums). For example, the Posavje Museum Brežice is mentioned as an institution representing the Posavje region and its cultural heritage. The article discusses the importance of cooperation between cultural institutions and the tourism sector. The article also emphasises that the visitor should have a more engaged experience developed in close collaboration with the locals and that the centre of the tourism experience is creativity. In this context, the article mentions and emphasises the importance of CCT and the authentic, interactive experience for the visitor. The article also offers a few suggestions on CCT products that could be implemented in the Posavje Museum Brežice.

The article "Gastronomic Tourism: Role in Sustainable Destination Development" (Poljak Istenič & Polak, 2023) discusses the importance of gastronomic tourism in the context of sustainable development of destinations (including rural ones). Gastronomic tourism provides destinations with

the opportunity to present their cultural uniqueness. It emphasises the fact that for most tourists, gastronomy is an important motivator for visiting. While the article does not delve into CCT, it does mention that implementing innovative solutions and experiences (for example, high-end gastronomic events) in gastronomy can increase the added value of the tourist's experience.

The article "Gastronomic Experiences and Wine Destinations: Developed Countryside" (Petek & Polak, 2023) explores some current trends in gastronomic and enogastronomic tourism and discusses their importance in developing (unique) experiences in the rural areas of Slovenia. It mentions different culinary events, wine festivals, and wine roads, which are crucial in promoting cultural tourism. It also mentions some tourist offers that would fall in the reals of CCT – for example, organised gatherings of medicinal herbs or workshops with celebrity Slovenian chefs.

4.4.3   Conclusion on the Alpine macro-region

Not surprisingly there seems to be an emphasis on nature and issues of sustainability in the Alpine region, which also corresponds to the lack of linkage between culture and tourism in macro-regional strategies. Mountain areas in the Alpine region can be very attractive for tourism in terms of experiencing nature and tranquillity or undertaking winter sports, but at the same time there are considerable challenges of accessibility. The traditional way of life of mountain communities is an important resource for potential cultural tourism development, but at the same time this is threatened by development and second homes.

Intangible heritage is important in the Alpine region, particularly as there is a relative lack of tangible cultural heritage attractions. There is an emphasis on elements such as language, storytelling and gastronomy. In some areas there are innovative products being developed, with cultural and creative experiences being added to the natural landscape. In Austria, Mossböck, Steiner and Apschner (2020) found that Alpine regions can add new technologies and cultural elements to shift from comparative to competitive advantage in terms of positioning.

Only 16 of the 76 (21%) of the case studies identified in the Italian CROCUS literature review (see Table 4.4) deal with the Alpine region. This is because many (tangible) heritage resources are in more urbanised areas of the country. This may also imply that the examples of innovation identified in the Italian case study relate mainly to lowland areas of the country.

4.5   Adriatic & Ionian (Croatia, Italy, Slovenia)

The Adriatic & Ionian region covers eight countries with 70 million inhabitants (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia). It includes many coastal areas with highly developed tourism destinations, as well as inland areas with lower levels of tourism. The macro-regional policy includes developing sustainable tourism, which includes cultural tourism as a specific target area. Developing cultural tourism is seen as a means of diversifying tourism products and services, helping to combat seasonality and improving tourism quality and innovation capacity. The Council of Europe (2020) argues that "the full potential of the region's rich natural, cultural, historic and archaeological heritage has not been exploited in a sustainable and responsible way" (p. 41). The COE report specifically highlights the under-representation of maritime heritage in the region. It further notes that "The potential of the Cultural Routes in the Adriatic and Ionian Region lies in the development of new business models, which rely on: multidimensional heritage values and the communication of these values; entrepreneurial development through the diversification of products and smart specialisation, oriented to niche tourism (creative, culinary, eco-cultural), including meaningful, responsible and sustainable travel." (p. 42).

The CROCUS partners from this macro-region are FMTU in Croatia, the University of Bergamo in Italy and the University of Maribor in Slovenia.

4.5.1   CCT in RRA in Croatia

The development of cultural tourism in inland areas of Croatia has been covered in Section 4.3 dealing with the Danube macro-region. Cultural tourism has been an important element of tourism policy for the past 20 years. There are ten sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list and 15 sites on the tentative list. All of these are in the coastal areas of the country (covered by the Adriatic & Ionian macro-region), including the historic city of Dubrovnik. There are also cultural landscapes, such as the Stari Grad Plain and the Stećak or monumental medieval tombstones that are scattered on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Among the strengths of Croatian rural tourism mention by Radnić, Milojica and Drpić (2012) are a number of factors, including:

- Large share of rural areas in Croatia
- Vicinity of generating tourist markets
- Rich sacred monuments heritage
- Rich traditional heritage (folklore, songs, music...)
- Well-preserved traditional architecture

However, a survey by Radnić et al. (2012) among domestic tourists indicated that 92% of respondents said that cultural resources were very important in tourism experiences, although they thought cultural resources were not well utilised for tourism.

As Čehić, Mesić and Oplanić (2020) report, along the Adriatic coast there are considerable cultural resources related to olive oil, including oil mills open for visitors, museums and interpretation centers, olive farms, protected geographical indications, events/fairs devoted to olives and olive oil, Olive Oil Routes and specialized shops for olive oil. There is also potential for Croatia to link olive oil tourism to the Mediterranean diet, which is already inscribed as UNESCO Intangible Heritage.

Urošević (2012) examined the relationship between cultural tourism and cultural identity in the coastal town of Pula. she found that residents perceived the importance of cultural heritage. The first place in the perception of its residence convincing holds the sea, then the history, culture and heritage ("huge supply of monuments in a small space"), position and proximity to emissive markets and resources. Pula could be considered a typical cultural tourism destination, with an emphasis on heritage tourism and creative industries. Using the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Survey she also surveyed visitors and found that almost half of the respondents were motivated by urban, cultural and creative tourism. Cultural tourism was particularly important for foreign tourists.

Urošević and Grubisic (2020) compared Pula and Šibenik as towns that are members of the Croatian Association of Historic Towns. They are both characterised by a high level of international tourism, with almost 90% of overnights being accounted for by foreign visitors. The Fortress of Culture in Šibenik had over 200,000 visitors in 2018. In Pula, the Cultural Strategy for 2014-2020 highlighted cultural heritage and the creative industries as major drivers of sustainable transformation. Key problems identified in the city included neglect of the urban fabric, inadequate coordination between the main stakeholders, and the lack of an effective model of heritage management.

A study comparing the Czech Republic and Croatia by Lovrentjev (2015) found that Croatia has considerable tourism potential in terms of intangible heritage. She suggested that creative tourism experiences might be a possible development trajectory for Croatia, based on traditional production of Croatian cheese and local crafts. Zadel and Rudan (2019) confirmed this potential in their review of creative tourism development in Croatia, where many tourists expressed a lack of satisfaction with the presentation of cultural heritage. This suggests there is potential for creative tourism development, although there is a lack of a national platform to promote it.

4.5.2 Italy

The general position of CCT in Italy has already been reviewed in the preceding Alpine macro-region analysis (Section 4.4.1).

Some specific types of CCT found in the Adriatic and Ionian region in Italy include gastronomic tourism (for example olive oil) and lighthouse tourism. But other types of tourism are also common, including Archaeological tourism, Enogastronomy, Rural tourism, and Agri-food heritage.

These areas of cultural tourism development indicate that there is potential to move away from the classic museum and monument-based model towards more creative forms of tourism based on intangible heritage.

4.5.3 Slovenia

The University of Maribor has been involved in much cultural and creative tourism research (e.g. Korez-Vide, 2013, 2017). A review of Slovenian CCT sources is also included in the Alpine macro-region analysis (Section 4.4).

In her first study, Korez-Vide (2013, p. 92) concluded that "Since the link between culture and tourism has not yet been established in Slovenia, cultural tourism is also not yet present in an organized form in Slovenia". At that point there were no institutional initiatives to support creative entrepreneurship in Slovenia and no creative tourism offers on the official web portal of Slovenian tourism. Storytelling and other creative inputs were later seen as a potential pathway to development, since "Supporting the emergence and development of creative potentials is one of the biggest opportunities for Slovenian tourism, since its comparative advantages in the field of tangible cultural heritage are relatively low." (Korez-Vide, 2017, p. 384). In 2013 the Slovenian Tourist Board launched the project "Stories in Slovenian Tourism". Slovenia has heterogeneous intangible cultural heritage of skills in arts and crafts and culinary tradition, which have potential for cultural and creative tourism development.

The Posavje region is renowned for its numerous castles that have been established along the Sava River and its tributaries. These castles serve as major tangible tourist attractions, and the Regional Development Agency (RRA) recently began creating digital content and experiences at the seven castles: Rajhenburg Castle, Brežice Castle, Kostanjevica na Krki Monastery, Sevnica Castle, Mokrice Castle and the castle ruins of Svibno and Kunšperk. These were involved as a case study in the INCULTUM EU Project (Borseková, Vitálišová, & Bitušíková, 2023). This aimed to create an immersive digital experience for tourists, blending modern technology with the rich history of the Posavje castles.

The website of the national tourist board shows that creative experiences have been considerably developed in the last decade, with many different offerings, including "Škofja Loka – a town of craftsmen", where "you can test your handicraft skills at a creative workshop or at numerous fairs and events.". Many different creative experiences are offered, including: pottery, printmaking, beer brewing, bread baking, flour milling, photography and felting (https://www.slovenia.info/en/stories/experiencing-the-regional-heritage-of-green-destinations). However, it appears that no subsequent assessment has been made of these initiatives or their impacts.

4.5.4 Conclusions for the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region

This review shows that many different CCT niches have been developed in this diverse region, which seems to confirm the regional policy of development potential related to new tourism niches. Most tourism is concentrated in coastal areas, where marine heritage represents a major resource.

However, inland areas are also slowly diversifying their products and adding competitive advantage, for example through the storytelling initiatives in Slovenia and Croatia.

Creative tourism also seems to have considerable potential in the region, particularly when supported by development and marketing initiatives at national level. Italy already has a mature cultural and creative tourism product related to gastronomy, but crafts and gastronomic experiences also exhibit growth in Slovenia and Croatia.

There is a certain unevenness in CCT development because of the distribution of major tangible heritage resources. This is being addressed by developing new business models, such as platforms linking distributed heritage attractions.

There is debate about the effect of second homes in some areas, which may affect the relationship between permanent and temporary residents. However, in view of the depopulation suffered by many inland areas, new residents may be more welcome as a source of cultural and creative vibrancy and economic stability.

5   RESEARCH GAPS

An analysis of the sources reviewed in the current study reveals a number of areas where there is a relative lack of research.

A frequency count of terms in the WOS and Scopus literature review full texts indicates that 'heritage' in general is the most common term, which is not surprising given its general nature. More specific attractions such as route(s) and festivals/events are also relatively well covered. Wine and olive oil as specific food resources are also relatively common, mainly thanks to extensive research by Spanish authors.

Table 5.1: Frequency of terms from the WOS and Scopus full text sources

Term	Number of occurrences
Heritage	3056
Route(s)	1547
Sustainability/sustainable	1206
Festival/event	1117
Wine	1002
Museum(s)	826
Nature	733
Landscape	654
Food	650
Olives	620
Music	371
Traditions	296

Some of the most frequently mentioned terms relate to common CCT activities in RRA, each of which potentially include a range of different business models. These include cultural routes, events, food, wine and music. This analysis also indicates that some areas of concern for the CROCUS Project are not currently well covered in the literature. These include gastronomy (as opposed to food or individual products, such as wine), cross-border collaboration and creative tourism. Sustainability is mentioned many times, but few articles deal specifically with the analysis of sustainability for rural tourism experiences (as indicated also in Section 3.4.2). Patterns of activities in rural areas are still not widely researched, with most studies tending to focus on single types of activity or attractions.

The following sections deal in more detail with the research gaps identified.

5.1   Remoteness and links between rural and urban areas

The issues of remoteness and peripherality have not been extensively researched in relation to CCT. In contrast, the urgency of analysing the role of tourism in these regions is growing with climate change and increasing visitor numbers. Much of the attraction of the periphery lies in the 'otherness' compared with more popular destinations. But as the accessibility of many peripheral places grows and tourism increases, the problem of maintaining a 'feel' of remoteness and authenticity of peripheral places becomes more complex.

In her study of Greenland, Cooper (2020) quotes Baudelaire, suggesting that the destination of human desire should be 'anywhere out of this world', or extraordinary places. Greenland is an extraordinary

destination, but what does this mean in the tourist imagination, and what consequences does it have for locals who inhabit the extraordinary everyday?

In the context of macro-regions it might be useful to consider the differences between the northern and southern peripheries of Europe. Both have distance from the centre, but the north is cold, 'indigenous' and thinly populated, whereas the south is warm and colonised by tourists. It is important to consider the relative numbers of tourists and locals, the flows of people to, from and within these peripheries and the effects that different styles of remote mobility can generate. In view of recent protests about tourism in the Canary Islands, what will the future relationship between tourists and local look like? In the north, the cold can also be a draw for entrepreneurs.

The nature of links between rural and urban areas has also been identified as a research gap. This is important, because as Pilving et al. (2022) note, many rural organisations are unable to create effective links, and organisations often rely on urban-rural links for effective operation. Longitudinal approaches may also be useful in understanding rural and urban networking and the evolution of ties between the stakeholders. The relationship between urban and rural is important because "Proximity to sophisticated consumers becomes a potential source of competitive advantage" (Pilving et al., 2022). In cities this is not a problem – in peripheral areas the challenge of finding consumers is mainly addressed through tourism, which brings the sophisticated consumers to the product.

There is also often tension between rural stakeholders and urban-based or centralised organisations: For example, in Romania: "ANTREC does not provide active marketing support, as it basically lists the guest-houses in its website without any promotional actions….ANTREC does nothing for us, but it wants our money" (Iorio & Corsale, 2014). The creation of links between urban and rural areas is therefore also a governance issue.

Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2020) suggest there is a need for future research into the relationship between local identity, heritage and hinterland areas. They see the engagement of wine-lovers with rural areas being increased through links with place, and similarly López-Guzmán et al. suggest in the context of olive oil whether such visits change the product consumption behaviour of visitors.

5.2   *Business models*

As noted above, there is a lack of research on business models in CCT, particularly in RRA. There are also a number of areas which are particularly relevant to the work of CROCUS that merit further attention, including business models related to accommodation, attractions, cultural routes, events, creative tourism.

Accommodation

There is considerable work on the relationship between CCT and tourist accommodation, but this tends to concentrate on specific areas or types of accommodation facilities. For example, the Albergo Diffuso model is well established in Italy (and some analysis has now emerged in Croatia), but does not seem to be well developed outside the Alpine and Adriatic regions. Heritage villages are common in many parts of southern Europe (particularly Portugal, Spain, Italy, Croatia), but little studied elsewhere.

Attractions

Cultural and heritage attractions are fundamental to CCT, but the role of different cultural and creative attractions in rural tourism is still not adequately researched. One might expect different effects to be produced by heritage sites, museums, cultural events or intangible cultural or creative attractions. However, we have found no direct comparison of the cultural, social or economic effects of such resources. There is also a disparity in terms of the type of attractions analysed in the literature. In terms of attractions there are only 17 mentions of ecomuseums in the English literature. There are far

more sources in French (100 documents in the HAL database, for example), but none of these deal with the tourism role of ecomuseums.

Cultural routes

There is a need for a deeper examination of the role of EU programmes such as LEADER and INTERREG in the development of cultural routes, and their links with the CCIs, in rural areas. Cultural routes were found to provide networking possibilities in the case of cultural associations (Malisiova & Kostopoulou, 2023), but there is little research on other governance mechanisms. López-Guzmán et al. (2009) also suggest comparisons between wine producing regions with an official Wine Route and those without.

The lack of impact research for cultural routes noted by Richards (2011) still holds. Most studies of cultural routes concentrate on key attractions along the route, rather than analysing flows along it. Forlani et al (2024) note: "Although the literature shows a general recognition of the potential of the Paths to generate value for the territory, there are few studies that, through empirical analyses, measure the multidimensional impact of these tourism enhancement initiatives." Based on qualitative research they conclude "The impact in terms of increased tourist flows and the emergence of new businesses linked to the passage of pilgrims, although observed, is less evident and becomes more pronounced as the area's marginality grows." There is a need to back up such assertions with quantitative data, perhaps derived from big data studies.

The lack of evidence on the economic impacts of cultural routes also calls into question their role as a generator of economic value. Their role is probably more important in terms of supporting local, regional and European identities and generating collaboration between stakeholder groups and across borders. This will be an important consideration in the cross-border Living Labs developed by CROCUS.

Events

Events and festivals are commonly used as sources of economic development in rural areas (Hjalager & Kwiatkowski, 2018), but few studies consider the mechanisms and linkages involved. Latorre et al. (2021) emphasise the role of food events in framing local foods. At present it seems that rural areas are linked to food products, whereas urban areas are seen as sites of gastronomic refinement and higher value experiences.

Again, there is a lack of research on impacts and effects. Few studies have considered the links between festivals and the surrounding rural areas, for example, or between events and the rural creative economy. There is arguably potential for rural events to act as catalysts and hubs for creative development, just as they do in cities (see Section 3.2.4).

Creative tourism

The analysis of creative tourism development lags behind research on cultural tourism. This partly because of the relatively recent advent of the former, but it also relates to the specificities of creative tourism. Although many creative workshops and activities have been developed in rural areas, these are not always linked to 'creative tourism'. There is a need to inventorise creative tourism opportunities, and to gauge the level of demand for creative tourism in different areas. In peripheral areas, Miettenen (2023) argues that nature-related knowledge and creative tourism can provide knowledge useful for visitors in their everyday lives (e.g. gardening skills, cultivating and processing plants, collecting and using wild plants, etc.). Such nature-based creative tourism is a research gap. There is also a need to study entrepreneurs' and local indigenous populations' point of view about what is important to display for marketing purposes. In relation to nature-based experiences, Björn and Lüthje (2023) also argue that cultural sensitivity is an important issue to consider. How can we ensure recognition, respect, and reciprocity in tourist encounters?

In theoretical terms there is a need to examine the boundaries between cultural and creative tourism, and between creative tourism and a number of surrogates, such as 'experiential tourism'. This was

defined in 2006 (Smith, 2006), but is still not widely understood. The effect of creative tourism on the creative industries and the entrepreneurial activities of creatives is also rarely studied.

5.3   Styles of Cultural and Creative Tourism

Although this review has identified key differences in the development of CCT across Europe, there is a lack of comparative analysis of different styles of cultural and creative tourism. Gómez-Vega et al. (2024) suggest that there is more emphasis on 'culture' in southern European countries, whereas 'creativity' tends to attract more attention in the north. It would be worth exploring the scale and meaning of this apparent division. It may align with the aversion to 'culture' in some northern countries (particularly the UK), the 'policy tourism' affecting trendy terms such as the 'creative class', or very concrete differences in governance and focus on cultural attributes. The CLIC Project also identified a specific gap in relation to the role of intangible cultural heritage in economic development, and discovering which mechanisms make this relationship work (Drouillon & Ost, 2022). This might extend to the influence of cultural participation on rural economic development.

The differences between urban and rural, and between rural and remote regions, have not been extensively explored in the literature. In terms of CCT, there should be prospects for exploring the differences between 'urbanity' and 'rurality' as drivers of tourism demand. In the area of creativity, the link between urbanity and the development of the creative industries has been extensively examined (van Boom, 2017). However, despite increasing discussion about the rise of a 'new rurality' with the arrival of the new middle class in rural areas, there has not been a similar link made between rurality and styles of tourism consumption. Saxena (2016) argues that rural areas have been transformed into consumption spaces through the staging processes involved in tourism. Aquilino, Harris and Wise (2021) see 'rurality' as "a collective connection whereby people share social and cultural constructions founded in place and community traditions." This suggests a link to place which is more heavily based in Panzera's parochial localism than the cosmopolitanism usually linked to urban cultural tourism. In rural areas, there is also a gap between newcomers and longstanding rural dwellers (Paniagua, 2016). However, studies of rural entrepreneurialism usually emphasise the role of newcomers in linking relatively isolated rural economies to global flows of resources and knowledge. One of the potential entry points to the study of rural and remote cultural tourism would be to study the role of different 'layers' in the cultural and economic system, akin to Cohendet's et al.'s (2010) categories of Upperground, Middleground and Underground in creative cities.

The idea of specific areas being linked to different consumption styles is also interesting in view of the contrast between rural and remote areas. Leban et al. (2024) examine the development of 'mindful luxury' in the Faroe Islands, arguing that "remoteness is the new luxury." Rurality could be explored as a contrast to urbanity, and perhaps remoteness could be framed as the "extraordinary elsewhere" in contrast to the "extraordinary everyday" in cities (Richards & Marques, 2018). McKerrell and Hornabrook (2022, p. 251) also note that "the geographical nature of (remote regions) almost forces you to have that slow experience with it because it's a difficult place to get around, you have to spend your time with it." There is also a need to consider the particular nature of creative businesses in remote areas, and how these can be supported through tourism.

Place-based business models for sustainable development of RRAs

There are few specific studies of business models in relation to CCT. Ammirato et al. (2022) consider digital business models, Richards (2021a) analyses business models for creative tourism, Alyfanti (2020) applies the BMC to heritage buildings and Santarsiero (2021) considers the role of innovation labs in business model innovation. But Panzera (2024) argues that business models are changing as public funding dwindles. The search for solutions for this funding 'gap' has seen "the adoption of new business models in which the private sector is involved in conservation and valorization activities through Public–Private Partnerships." Attention is therefore needed for emerging business models in RRA.

Many different potential business models were identified from the literature review as described in CROCUS Deliverable D2.2 (James, L. et al., 2024). In this section we outline some of the potential business models that have not been widely analysed in the literature, and which have potential to act as placed-based development tools for RRA.

Governance

The role of tourists as facilitators of a more inclusive destination structure, potentially empowering community and local entrepreneurial stakeholders. Duxbury (2021) identifies a number of areas related to governance, and particularly more attention to bottom-up and endogenous modes of development, the role of place as a collaborative platform for local development and the emergence of 'mixed frameworks'. The current review has identified many different styles of governance, but which is best for CCT in RRA?

Strzelecka, Boley and Strzelecka (2017) found a large social distance between residents and local authorities in Polish villages. Perhaps comparisons between different macro-regions would be useful in this respect as well. Future research should include place identity, place dependence and nature bonding constructs when considering residents' ability to be empowered through tourism.

The suggestion of Duxbury et al. (2021) to develop 'open governance' for creative tourism is interesting, but not defined. One challenge of the CROCUS project could be to analyse the different governance models available and find the most appropriate style(s) for CCT in RRA.

Multi-level governance is a concept which is often mentioned in the wider regional development literature, but which is largely absent from work on CCT in RRA. In a study of tourism management on the German-Czech border, Stoffelen, Ioannides and Vanneste (2017) examine issues of governance at different scales. They note the challenge of border regions, which are often far away from centres of power. This makes multi-level governance more desirable, since at a local level there is more of a feeling for the reality of the border, whereas at regional or national level the issues are more abstract. They found that local stakeholders had high priorities for tourism projects, which contrasted with a relatively low strategic emphasis on tourism in cross-border actions at regional level. They argue that understanding destination management processes across borders therefore requires:

- explicit multi-scalar analysis;
- recognition of both transnational and within-country contexts;
- more cross-pollination between tourism planning and cross-border governance research

In terms of the CROCUS approach to CCT in RRA it is important to recognise that RRA have a specific challenge in relation to place, because they are often far removed from governance structures. This means that the place relations which are central to local concerns (cultural heritage, identities) may be peripheral to wider governance structures. Finding ways to increase local implication in the development of governance arrangements for new business models is therefore an important challenge. Such issues of governance also impinge on the ability of locals to address other key issues, such as the sustainability of heritage and tourism.

Multi-scalar cross-border policies and RRA

Effective governance is crucial in RRA where resources and actors are thinly spread, suggesting that multi-scalar governance approaches could be a possible solution. There is very little work evident on multi-scalar cross border policies and RRA. From the research done by Stoffelen et al. (2017) one might conclude that multi-scalar governance is particularly relevant for such areas, given the gap that is often present between different governance levels and their perception of border-related issues.

5.4   Sustainability and interactions between visitors and residents

Sustainability is central to the future development of CCT, and it also hinges largely on the relationships between the tourists visiting RRA and the people who live there. However, sustainability issues remain a relatively underdeveloped area of research in RRA.

Cerisola and Panzera (2024) argue that cultural and heritage tourism is often associated with sustainability in rural areas. However, the relationship weakens when tourist volumes increase. Future research could consider the interaction of cultural tourism with intangible heritage assets and to how this affects local development.

Ottaviani, De Luca and Åberg (2024) note a lack of transnational research in terms of cultural tourism sustainability. They used the Business Model Canvas (BMC) to analyse digital tourism, but this lacks a rural tourism perspective. Although an outline of the adapted BMC is available on their website (https://textour-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TExTOUR_guideline_Annex5.pdf), no results of this analysis were found.

Zollet (2024) argues more work is needed on the challenges facing specific groups in RRAs, including women, minorities and entrepreneurs. Carvalho et al. (2023) suggest studying creative entrepreneurs and examining what motivates them to participate in creative tourism and what they learn from the co-creation process present in such experiences. The specific nature of tourism involvement in rural and remote areas is also worthy of more study, particularly as Ruiz-Ballesteros & Gonzalez-Portillo (2024) have observed villagers in Spain withdrawing from the tourism sector. Could creative tourism act as an alternative mode that fits better with lifestyle and ideology of residents than traditional rural or cultural tourism?

This work suggests that new business models will have to be cognisant of the potential frictions that can arise between different groups in RRA and attempt to address these by stimulating mutually positive interactions.

Interaction between visitors and residents

Visitor-resident interactions are important because Kastenholz et al. (2013) suggest that interaction with locals offers visitors a deeper, more 'authentic' and more meaningful experience. This should mean that authentic experiences are more memorable, and can create bonds between visitors and residents, enhancing sustainability. But in the case of rural areas suffering depopulation, interaction opportunities may be limited. This may underline the need to study the neo-rural, lifestyle entrepreneurs investing in tourism and acting as 'cultural brokers' of a rural living context they identify with and are passionate about. Such 'switchers', have also been identified in the CREATOUR research (Duxbury et al., 2021). Switchers can become meaning makers, shaping the experience of the rural. In the case of CCT in RRA, the switchers link not just the networks of tourism and culture, but also the urban and rural. This issue is worthy of further research because of the ambiguous role of incomers in RRA. Although there is much research suggesting that newcomers may serve to link RRA to global flows of information and resources, there are suggestions that an influx of new residents may not add much to the social and cultural fabric of the community, and may indeed stimulate negative effects, such as rural gentrification.

Most research currently focusses on the benefits of tourism to residents, and their attitudes towards tourism. The relationship between tourists and residents is rarely examined directly, and the role exchanges beyond the economic is not considered. However, the INCULTUM Project did make some recommendations in terms of building "heritage communities between residents and visitors in order to ensure sustainable development that is respectful of local identity as well as visitor needs" (INCULTUM Project, 2024). The idea of a heritage community has potential links with developing theories of co-creation, although most work in the tourism field remains centred on producer-consumer co-creation, and has not yet moved on to consider experience communities bringing different stakeholders together (Richards, 2021d).

5.5   Developing place-based perspectives

The macro-regional approach to development adopted by the European Union emphasises the role of place in increasing sustainability and responsiveness to local needs. In the RRA literature, however, the concept of place is often reduced to specific locations, rather than holistic considerations of geographical inter-relationships of place (Saar & Palang, 2009). The CROCUS literature review revealed only three sources in the database that deal specifically with cultural landscapes, which suggests a lack of holistic approaches to cultural tourism.

Research gaps related to the place perspective include the determinants of place attachment as well as moderating factors, such as 'cultural proximity', 'sensation-seeking' propensity or personality traits. Qualitative research can also reveal which sensory stimuli affect emotions and, subsequently, place attachment.

Branding and marketing places

The development of place brands has become central to CCT marketing in recent years (Richards, 2021e). As noted above, cultural/creative elements such as gastronomy, architecture and film have been increasingly used as branding and marketing elements at national and local level in recent years. Kastenholz et al. (2020) suggest paying attention to branding designed to link through emotion, such as 'Celtic Wave', 'Atlantic Diet', etc. Is it possible to excite consumers about rural places, therefore creating new meaning? There has been specific discussion of the 'nordic wave' and the branding of peripheral areas (Cassinger et al., 2019). This can stimulate tourism, but as Cassel (2019) notes: "indigenous engagements in tourism branding paradoxically draw on traditional and sometimes stereotypical representations…. (and) issues of authenticity and indigenous control are negotiated through the participation of Sámi interests and entrepreneurs in branding tourism destinations."

In general, attention for tourism marketing issues per se seems to have declined in recent years, with more attention being paid to place branding.

Authenticity

Several studies mention the authenticity of RRA and/or cultural practices and landscapes in these areas. There is, not surprisingly, no coherent approach to the issue of authenticity, although one consistent concern seems to be the shift from a living culture, sustained by a 'local' community, towards environments that resemble museums or theme parks. Such concerns seem to be growing with the increased volume of tourism trips into many areas (particularly those close to urban areas). Increased demand for experiences that provide embedding in the rural context contrasts with the growing challenge of finding 'locals' to interact with.

New technologies

The development of new technologies related to social media, mapping and interpretation have brought the role of place to the fore, as location-related information can now be supplied directly to cultural and creative tourists via their hand-held devices. However, the future role of new technologies in RRA has still not been widely considered, and it did not feature as an important theme in the literature review.   Petrić, Mandić and Mikulić (2025) mention the development of VR experiences and digital storytelling as opportunities for rural areas in the future, but this idea is not developed any further. In the wider context of RRA development, digital technologies will probably be crucial in supporting networks.

Little is known about the use of cooperation for the implementation of digital applications in rural cultural tourism marketing. Suggested areas for future research include focussing on cultural institutions in rural areas, because they have problems in implementing digital applications. The suggestion to use big data to analyse cultural tourism (e.g. Bertacchini & Dalle Nogari, 2021) raises the question of whether digital techniques now commonly used in cities can be easily transferred to rural

and remote areas. Big data analysis might allow RRA to know more about visitor profiles and behaviour, but the density of visitors and data generation is much lower than in cities.

The role of new technologies is an important research gap, particularly given the EU macro-region initiatives to use digitalisation to strengthen the resilience of mountain and rural villages. Learning how such initiatives could help to stimulate CCT, or be supported through the growth of tourism flows, will be important for the future.

5.6   In summary: Main gaps in the literature

The analysis of emerging research gaps produces a picture of potentially fruitful lines of analysis for the CROCUS Project. There is a relative lack of work on CCT in RRA in general, especially in relation to creative tourism. This also means that not much is known about the functioning of different business models. There is a lack of empirical data in many areas, including accommodation demand and flows of visitors along cultural routes. Transnational studies are also few and far between. For example, differences in the scale and style of CCT have emerged from the national analyses. In their analysis of the Italian literature Dauro Zocchi and Andrea Pozzi argue: "Cultural and creative tourism in rural and remote areas of Italy is distinct due to its emphasis on leveraging local tangible and intangible cultural heritage." Without comparisons, however, it is difficult to understand the distinctions, or the processes underlying them.

Peñalosa and Castaldi (2024) also identify a need for research to examine absolute and relative levels of geographical peripherality separately, to uncover distinct patterns. These could also be linked to the macro regions, which are themselves currently under-researched. Lack of data also allows common assumptions about tourism to go unchallenged – for example the idea that cultural tourism is a particularly fast-growing market (Richards, 2021c), or that cultural tourism is more sustainable, for example. Such assumptions need empirical support.

There is a lack of a distinctly European perspective on the issues outlined here. Much recent research on RRA and CCT has come from Asia, where the concepts of cultural and creative tourism are treated very differently and the context of the rural and remote is also different. There is a need to tie the research on CCT in RRA to European policy frameworks. In doing so, we should also separate the effects of different drivers. Horáková (2010) points out that a big failure of previous research is separating the social consequences of tourism from other processes of change occurring independently in a society. "A fundamental question is whether it is tourism that is responsible for the changes observed, or some other factors."

Digitalisation is an increasingly important part of rural tourism, particularly in terms of place curation and the provision of information and experiences (Richards, 2024). The growth of platforms offering cultural and creative tourism is a trend that has not been widely studied in relation to RRA.

In general, the private sector has taken on a more active role, particularly as public sector funding has dwindled (Faganel & Trnavcevic, 2012). However, the role of the private sector and private-public partnerships has not been analysed in detail.

Sustainability is a growing issue in relation to CCT in RRA, but few studies take a strategic approach to the issue. Sustainability is usually implicit, for example in the idea that small-scale tourism is automatically sustainable. Again, this is an issue that indicates the need for a holistic approach or a systemic approach, but the scope of most studies is limited (in the academic literature this is inevitable given the tendency to work in the limited format of journal articles).

There is relatively little attention for the evolution of the literature. Duxbury (2021) presents a picture of how the rural creativity literature has developed, but not in relation to tourism. In general terms, one might posit a shift from consumption to production to co-creation to place /placemaking, with the

latter implying an increasingly active implication of a wider range of actors. This is also implicated in the development of the *Albergo Diffuso* model of accommodation.

Both rural and peripheral areas are usually defined in terms of their opposition to other places – to the urban and to the 'centre'. This means a highly dependent relationship, which can only be challenged by changing styles of travel – particularly in terms of 'slow' travel.

This academic literature review provides a different picture from the analysis of policy documents. There is more attention for rural areas in particular in publications from local and regional authorities (as noted in some of the national analyses of the literature), but these are generally not picked up by academics. This is particularly evident in smaller countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, where most academic publishing has shifted to English and national policy issues are therefore often ignored in academic research. This indicates a need to re-articulate the academic analysis of CCT in RRA with policy frameworks.

A more holistic view should be developed that links the context of RRA and the policy frameworks with the activities and impacts of tourist activity, particularly in terms of culture and creativity. The presence of culture is often seen as an attraction for tourists, but little account is taken of the wider context of their behaviour, and how their activities on holiday articulate with those at home. The interaction of tourists and those residing in the destination is often also ignored, or reduced to narrow roles such as 'host' and 'guest'. There is a growing realisation that tourists travel for more than activities or attractions – they also travel to experience places. But what attracts tourists about a place, and what roles do culture and heritage play in this? Addressing these issues suggest the need for a place-based or placemaking approach to CCT in RRA, as discussed in Section 3.4.3.

6   Conclusions: CCT in RRA reviewed

The review of sources in the CROCUS Database indicates that there is a lack of specific studies on CCT in RRA. There tends to be more attention for cultural heritage in urban areas and highly touristed locations. Border regions seem to be a particularly weak research area. Border areas in general are under-researched, and most border studies focus on the border itself, rather than areas around the border or cross-border governance.

There are notable differences between countries and macro-regions in terms of the quantity and focus of CCT research. The coverage of publications is closely related to geography, for example with a preponderance of gastronomy and wine studies in southern Europe. This points to a weakness in terms of spatial reductionism, as indicated in the critique of macro-regional policy by Bialasiewicz, Giaccaria, Jones and Minca (2013). Even in studies of cultural and creative resources there is a tendency to relate rural environments to traditional culture and a nostalgia for the past. This link is stronger in the macro-regions of the south, and less so in the north, where experience-led tourism and culture policies have focussed on competitive rather than comparative advantage.

The differences between the resource base of the macro-regions therefore tends to strongly influence the distribution of CCT business models. This is also reflected in the suggested heritage focus for each of the macro-regions by the Council of Europe (2020). There are some exceptions, such as the development of creative, storytelling-based products in Croatia and Slovenia, for example.

The relative lack of previous work on CCT in RRA leaves several fruitful avenues for CROCUS to explore in terms of innovative business models. In particular, even though rural and remote areas tend to rely more heavily on intangible rather than tangible heritage resources, there is a relative lack of CCT research in this area.   More importantly, most studies tend to concentrate either on tangible or intangible heritage, without considering the possible links and synergies between the two. However, most tourist experiences tend to combine tangible and intangible resources (such as visiting a monument which has storytelling and interpretation, for example). The different aspects of the tourist experience also come together in specific places, but the qualities of place that contribute to the tourist experience are seldom considered in research on CCT.

The lack of place-based perspectives is important, because places are also where the interests of different tourism and heritage stakeholders come together and common interests (or a 'heritage community', to quote the INCULTUM Project, 2023) are forged. The role of place is therefore one of the important cornerstones of the theoretical approach of the CROCUS Project as discussed in more detail by Richards, James and Halkier (2024).

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