

BRIDGING THE POLICY-PRACTICE GAP IN HERITAGE TOURISM-LED URBAN REGENERATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SOCIAL EQUITY, MANAGEMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive systematic literature review on the role of heritage tourism in urban regeneration, focusing on how it can drive socio-economic growth while promoting heritage tourism towards sustainable urban regeneration. Using a selection process that follows PRISMA guidelines, 39 peer-reviewed articles from the Scopus database, applying a comprehensive search query, the review identifies five key themes: urban policies and community participation, effective management practices, mechanisms of urban regeneration, socio-economic impacts of environmental improvements, and tourists' willingness to pay for heritage conservation. The findings highlight the critical role of inclusive policies, community involvement, and sustainable management in ensuring that heritage tourism promotes equitable and long-term urban revitalization. Despite the benefits of tourism-driven regeneration, challenges such as gentrification, cultural commodification, and the marginalization of local communities persist. Additionally, while environmental improvements and tourists' willingness to pay offer economic opportunities, a lack of integrated policy frameworks limits their potential. This study provides actionable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and tourism managers to create more equitable, sustainable strategies for heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, while also addressing gaps in existing research.

Keywords: Urban regeneration; Heritage tourism; Community participation; Cultural preservation; Sustainable tourism; Urban policies; Tourism management practices.

1. Introduction

Urban regeneration has become a central focus in urban planning and development, particularly in cities aiming to revitalize their historical and cultural assets (Son, 2018). In this context, heritage tourism has emerged as a key driver for urban regeneration, offering not only economic benefits but also opportunities to enhance cultural identity and preserve historical sites (Boussaa, 2021; Kim, Kim, & Woosnam, 2023). The growing interest in heritage tourism has spurred extensive research exploring its impact on urban regeneration (Boussaa, 2021). Scholars have examined various aspects, including the role of urban policies, community participation, management practices, and socio-economic factors that influence the sustainability of heritage-led urban regeneration initiatives (El Faouri & Sibley, 2022). Despite the increasing body of literature, there remains a gap in understanding the complex interplay between these factors and the practical strategies required to achieve balanced and sustainable urban regeneration through heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism, characterized by visitors engaging with a city's historical, cultural, and architectural legacy, offers significant potential for economic growth and cultural preservation (Lazarević, Arbutina, & Popović, 2022; Rezaei, Ghaderi, & Ghanipour, 2022). Many cities worldwide have adopted heritage tourism as a catalyst for urban regeneration, seeking to reinvigorate neglected or marginalized neighbourhoods, restore historical landmarks, and foster a sense of cultural pride among local communities (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Ebejer, 2019). However, the success of these efforts depends heavily on the formulation and implementation of inclusive policies, effective management practices, and the active involvement of local stakeholders (Della Lucia & Pashkevich, 2023; Rahman & Halim, 2021). Urban regeneration initiatives often face challenges such as gentrification, commercialization of cultural heritage, and the risk of marginalizing local communities in favour of tourism-led development (Imai, 2012; Lei & Zhou, 2022). These challenges highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of how heritage tourism can be harnessed to drive urban regeneration in a way that is both economically viable and culturally sensitive (Zhu, Yu, & Li, 2024). The purpose of this paper is to systematically review the existing literature on the intersection of heritage tourism and urban regeneration, aiming to identify key themes, strategies, and gaps in current research. To guide this exploration, the review is driven by some important research questions, including: How do urban policies influence community participation in heritage tourism-led urban regeneration which helps in effective management practices that balance economic benefits with cultural preservation? What is the socio-economic impact of environmental improvements on tourism in the context of urban regeneration which can be leveraged to support long-term preservation efforts?

By addressing these research questions, this paper seeks to fill the gap in the current literature, providing a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on the role of heritage tourism in urban regeneration (refer Figure 1). The findings aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how inclusive policies, community participation, and sustainable management practices can be effectively integrated to promote urban renewal while preserving cultural heritage. Moreover, this study identifies areas for future research that could further inform policy development, research implication and practical applications in the field. In doing so, it aspires to guide policymakers, urban planners, and tourism managers toward more holistic, equitable, and sustainable approaches to heritage tourism-led urban regeneration.

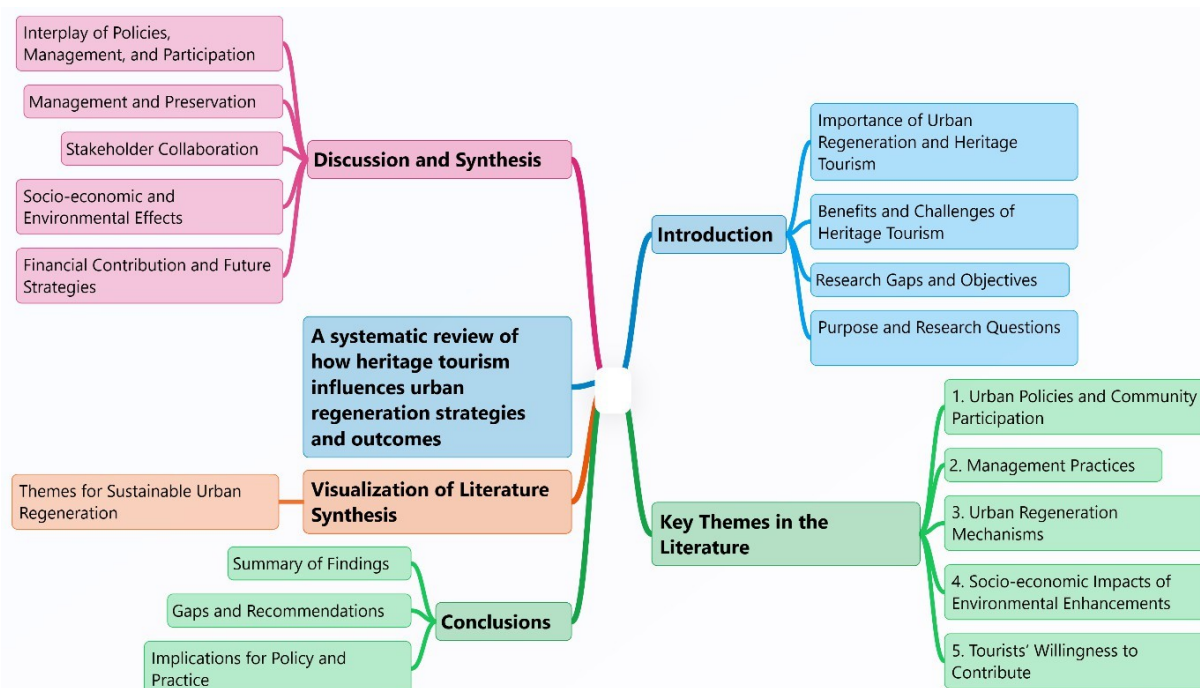


Figure 1: Screening and selection process of studies, illustrating the overview of the systematic literature review on urban regeneration and heritage tourism

2. Review Method and Structure

To conduct a comprehensive review of the intersection between urban regeneration and heritage tourism, a systematic literature search was carried out using the Scopus database. The search query was carefully constructed to capture relevant studies that explore the key themes within this research area. The specific search query employed was:

(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Urban Regeneration" OR "Urban revival" OR "Urban revitalization") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("heritage tourism"))

This formulation ensured the inclusion of works that discussed various aspects of urban regeneration in the context of heritage tourism, either in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. Scopus was chosen for its extensive and multidisciplinary collection of peer-reviewed literature, making it one of the most comprehensive sources for academic research (Pilelienė, Grigaliūnaitė, & Bogoyavlenska, 2024; Prerana, Kapoor, & Jain, 2024; Yadav, 2024). Additionally, the advanced search functionalities in Scopus allow precise filtering, increasing the likelihood of retrieving relevant articles. The initial search yielded 51 documents, which then underwent a rigorous screening process by following PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) shown in Figure 2. First, the selection was refined by excluding certain types of publications: books (1), book chapters (5), and conference papers (2). This approach aimed to focus solely on peer-reviewed journal articles, as they typically provide more detailed research and critical analysis. Subsequently, articles not published in English were excluded to ensure consistency in analysis and interpretation. Lastly, a relevance assessment was conducted, during which studies that did not directly address urban regeneration or heritage tourism were omitted based on a thorough review of their titles, abstracts, and full texts.

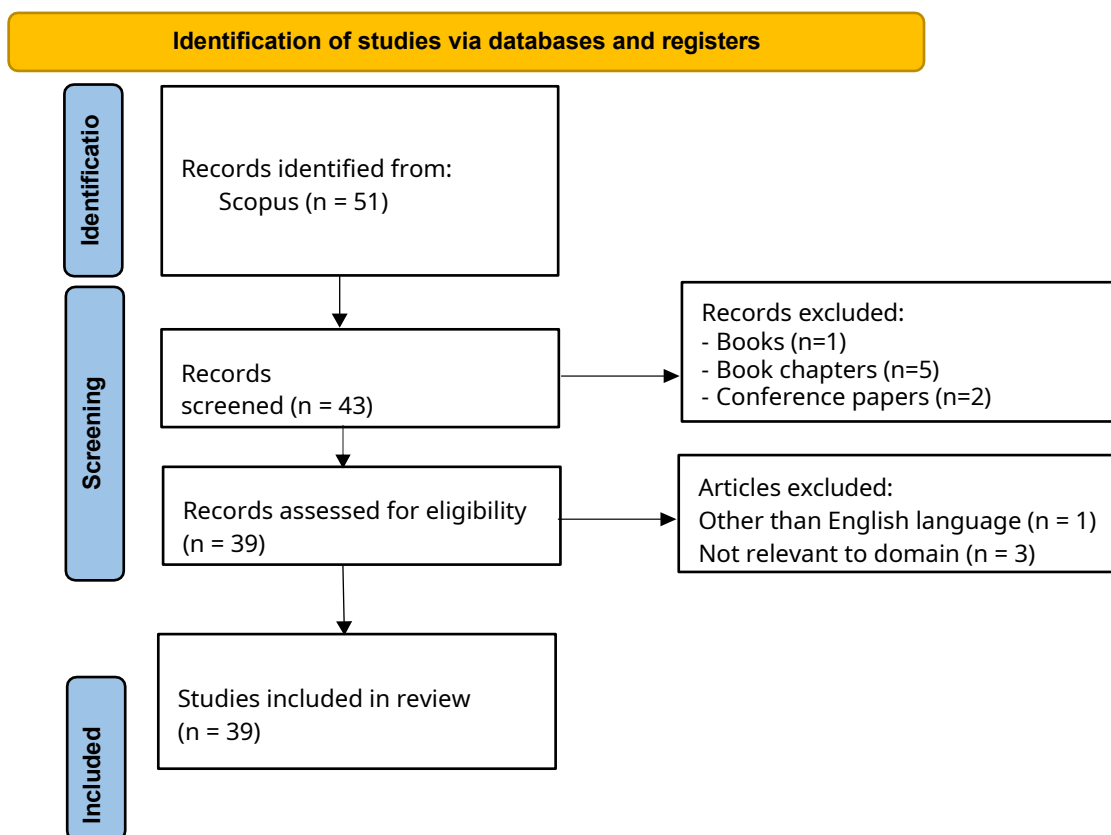


Figure 1: PRISMA Model

After completing this meticulous screening process, 39 papers were identified as the final set for review in Table 1 (see in Annexure 1). These selected studies offer a diverse and comprehensive overview of current research on the role of heritage tourism in urban regeneration, serving as the foundation for the analysis and synthesis undertaken in this review.

Table 1: Brief Overview of the Articles (Annexure 1)

Authors	Study Area	Types	Method	Brief Overview
Caffyn and Lutz (1999)	Birmingham , UK	Urban heritage tourism	Case study approach	This study seeks to examine the urban policies designed to encourage the community participation in urban heritage tourism projects. It reveals that the city is suffering from marginalization issues, especially in terms of various tourism attractions.
Russo and Van Der Borg (2002)	Lyon, Lisbon, Rotterdam, and Turin	Cultural heritage tourism	Case study approach for four cities in Europe.	This study seeks to evaluate cultural tourism across four European cities and identify effective management practices. The results highlight the importance of visitor accessibility and hospitality that enhances sustainable tourism.
Daher (2005)	Jordan	Built heritage tourism	Project based-heritage management	The paper examines to analyse the mechanisms behind urban regeneration and heritage tourism in salt, Jordan, especially focusing on the role of international donors and local actors. The

				research concludes that these projects were primarily focusing on tourism promotion rather than genuine urban regeneration, with minimal local involvement.
Hurley (2006)	St. Louis	Recreational heritage tourism	Project valuation method	The research used to investigate the socio-economic impact of water quality improvements on tourism through valuation methods. Therefore, it concludes that the improved water quality has a significant positive effect on recreational tourism demand and associated benefits.
Dutta, Banerjee, and Husain (2007)	India	Socio-economic heritage tourism	TOBIT model is used in the contingent valuation method	This work explores the determinants of tourists' willingness to pay for heritage site conservation using statistical models. Therefore, the research identifies education and awareness as key factors influencing willingness to pay for heritage preservation.
Imai (2012)	Kawagoe, Japan	Cultural heritage tourism	Case Study approach	The research investigates the impact of different tourism plans related to the urban environment, community structure, and local economy of the neighbourhood. The findings suggest that evaluating community development can revitalize tourism approaches that offer new possibilities, and they also present the preservation of townscape as serving as a potential catalyst for sustainable development, ultimately making communities self-reliant and resilient.
Uysal and Özden (2012)	Istanbul, Turkey	Cultural heritage tourism	Statistical analysis	The paper examines the impact of tourism-led urban regeneration in Istanbul, Turkey, with a focus on sustainability. It was found that the study demonstrated that while tourism can drive urban regeneration, the projects often missed the opportunity to involve local communities, leading to unsustainable outcomes.
Bolognani (2012)	Balford, UK	Cultural heritage tourism	Case-based policy assessment	The paper examines the shifting cultural policies and urban regeneration strategies in Bradford, UK. The study reveals that the research highlights that cultural elements were gradually excluded from Bradford's urban regeneration policies, shifting from a celebration of diversity to the exclusion of minority cultures.

Y. D. Liu (2014)	European cities-Greece	Cultural heritage tourism	Case study approach, and historical document analysis methods	The paper examines the role of cultural events like the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) in promoting cultural tourism and urban regeneration. The study concludes that while ECoC events can boost tourism and urban revitalization, long-term success requires sustained efforts and collaboration between public and private sectors.
Lashua, Spracklen, Long, and Roberts (2014)	Liverpool, UK	Cultural heritage tourism	Comparative analysis	The research investigates the cultural and economic impacts of Liverpool's designation as the 2008 European Capital of Culture. The findings suggest that the designation boosted tourism and cultural infrastructure development, but there was a lack of integration with broader urban planning efforts.
De Liu (2015)	Liverpool, UK	Cultural heritage tourism	Case Study approach	This study examines how large cultural events, like Liverpool's European Capital of Culture, contribute to urban regeneration. It was found that while the event spurred some tourism growth and cultural infrastructure development, it did not significantly drive long-term urban regeneration.
Jung, Lee, Yap, and Ineson (2015)	South Korea	Cultural heritage tourism	Project based-heritage management	This study examines the dynamics of stakeholder collaboration in culture-led urban regeneration projects, taking the Gwangju project in South Korea as a case study. The findings indicate that stakeholder collaboration was constrained, with unequal power distribution and inadequate local participation hindering the project's sustained success.
Boussaa (2015)	Doha, Qatar	Traditional heritage tourism	Case Study approach	This study evaluates the role of traditional heritage tourism and its implications for urban conservation and regeneration. It reveals that the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage pose significant challenges for heritage managers, particularly in terms of determining what is culturally significant to the site. Moreover, the study reveals that cultural heritage is frequently under-observed and inappropriately promoted for tourists, potentially undermining its

				integrity.
Bachin (2015)	Czech Republic	Urban Heritage tourism	Statistical analysis- Questionnaire survey	This study assesses visitor perceptions of regenerated brownfield sites in the South Moravian region, focusing on awareness and satisfaction. The findings indicate that nearly 58% of visitors were unaware of the sites' brownfield status, with varying levels of satisfaction regarding functionality, highlighting the need for improved public awareness of brownfield regeneration.
Delconte, Kline, and Scavo (2016)	North Carolina, USA	Heritage and Leisure Tourism	Comparative analysis using community capital framework (CCF)	This research examines the historical context and significance of various brownfield sites in Europe, with a focus on their transformation for leisure and tourism. The study's findings highlight the versatility of brownfields as tourist attractions, underscoring the importance of preserving their historical heritage to boost public interest and optimize site functionality.
Rezaei (2017)	Yazd, Iran	Heritage Tourism	Qualitative analysis	This study investigates the cultural impacts of tourism on the local residents of the historical area of Yazd, Iran. The results show that tourism has contributed to both economic benefits and cultural erosion, posing significant challenges for the indigenous population. This underscores the importance of integrating sustainable tourism practices that prioritize local community concerns and foster culturally sensitive development.
Ferrari and Guala (2017)	Italy	Cultural heritage tourism	Empirical Statistical analysis	This research examines the relationship between mega-events and the urban identity of three Italian cities, with a focus on the strategic planning and community engagement required for successful event hosting. The study's results reveal that effective planning and community participation are essential for harnessing the benefits of mega-events, as they can profoundly impact a city's image and public perception.
Navratil et al. (2018)	Czech Republic	Heritage and Leisure Tourism	Qualitative assessments based on visitor feedback and	This study explores the relationship between brownfield regeneration and heritage preservation, assessing public perceptions and the impact of specific

			statistical analysis.	sites. The results indicate a positive visitor response to brownfield regeneration, but highlight a disconnect between functionality and heritage preservation, suggesting that site-specific factors significantly influence public perceptions.
Mohamed, Samarghandi, Samir, and Mohammed (2020)	Saudi Arabia	Urban heritage tourism	Space syntax methodology to quantitatively measure and compare urban contexts.	This research assesses the proposed development plan for Al-Ula Old-Town in Saudi Arabia, examining its impact on connectivity, legibility, and the site's historical identity. The study's findings demonstrate that the proposed development yields significant improvements in connectivity (13.6%), global integration (27.8%), and intelligibility (52.1%), thereby creating a more pedestrian-friendly and accessible environment that respects the site's historical character.
Lak, Gheitasi, and Timothy (2020)	Birjand, Iran	Cultural heritage tourism	Case Study approach-qualitative methodology through semi-structured interview	This study investigates the potential of urban regeneration through cultural heritage-based tourism in Birjand, South Khorasan Province, Iran. The research findings reveal that, while significant opportunities exist for revitalizing Birjand through its cultural heritage and tourism, challenges such as inadequate cultural policies and resource limitations hinder effective urban regeneration strategies.
Zhao, Ponzini, and Zhang (2020)	Xi'an, China	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative Case study approach	This research examines the dynamics of land value capture and policy networks in heritage-led urban development, with a focus on the Big Wild Goose Pagoda area in Xi'an, China. The study's findings demonstrate that, despite generating substantial economic benefits, heritage-led development often perpetuates social inequality by excluding local communities from the economic gains, highlighting the need for more inclusive and equitable development policies.
Xie, Lee, and Wong (2020)	Macau	Industrial Heritage tourism	Ground Theory approach	This study explores community attitudes toward the reuse of industrial heritage, specifically focusing on the defunct shipyard in Lai Chi Vun Village, Macau. The findings reveal that residents expressed concerns

				about privacy and potential disturbances from tourism, while
				also emphasizing the importance of their rights and interests in the development process, highlighting a complex balance between heritage preservation and community needs.
Zhang, Cenci, Becue, and Koutra (2021)	Belgium	Industrial Heritage tourism	Case Study approach	This paper examines the conservation and renewal of industrial heritage in Belgium, emphasizing its role as a vector for cultural regeneration and tourism development. The study found that, while industrial heritage tourism is well-established in Belgium, it faces challenges due to the country's limited land area and regional disparities, highlighting the need for a stronger driving force for development to overcome these obstacles.
Rezaei et al. (2022)	Qazvin, Iran	Built heritage tourism	Qualitative statistical analysis	This research investigates the perceptions of visitors, shopkeepers, and neighborhood residents regarding the revitalization and adaptive reuse of Sa'd al-Saltaneh Caravanserai in Qazvin, Iran. The findings reveal varied attitudes among stakeholders, highlighting concerns about the impact of tourism on local life, the importance of community involvement in the revitalization process, and the potential benefits of transforming the caravanserai into a cultural and commercial hub.
Z. Liu et al. (2022)	Hong Kong	Cultural heritage tourism	Mixed method approach	This research investigates the categorization of cultural tourism attractions in Central Hong Kong through the analysis of location-based social network data, with the aim of informing urban tourism management. The findings demonstrate that tourists exhibit distinct preferences for different attraction types, suggesting that newly revitalized sites appeal to different demographics than longer-established attractions, thereby enabling targeted tourism strategies that cater to diverse visitor segments.
Simic et al. (2022)	Serbia	Heritage Tourism	Comparative analysis	This paper evaluates the urban regeneration process of the Dorćol power plant and marina, focusing on the balance

				between profit-driven development and social sustainability. The research concludes that social sustainability principles were largely neglected during the initial phases of regeneration, with a shift towards more participatory processes occurring only in later stages, though still lacking full transparency and inclusivity.
Lei and Zhou (2022)	Datong, China	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative case study approach	This study assesses the role of heritage tourism in driving urban renewal in historical and cultural urban spaces, using the city of Datong, China as a case study. The findings demonstrate that effective heritage tourism strategies can revitalize urban areas while preserving cultural identity, provided that they incorporate active participation from local communities to ensure alignment with their needs and priorities.
T. H. Xiang and Mohamad (2023); (Zhang et al., 2021)	Petaling, Malaysia	Cultural heritage tourism	Mixed method approach	This study investigates how placemaking attributes influence tourism experiences in Petaling Street, Malaysia, with the aim of enhancing urban tourism through effective design and community engagement. The findings demonstrate that specific placemaking elements, such as cultural authenticity and accessibility, play a significant role in enhancing tourists' overall experiences and satisfaction.
Syafrini, Mardhiah, Permata, and Saputri (2023)	Indonesia	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative research approach	This study investigates the role of social capital in the development of cultural heritage tourism in a former mining town in West Sumatra, Indonesia, with the aim of understanding how community engagement can enhance tourism initiatives. The findings demonstrate that strong social networks and community participation are crucial factors in the successful development of cultural heritage tourism, contributing to the preservation of local identity and economic benefits.
Nyau and Chin (2023)	Brunei	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative research methodology	This study examines stakeholders' perceptions of the role of cultural heritage tourism in urban regeneration in Brunei. The findings demonstrate that cultural heritage tourism is beneficial for preserving heritage and enhancing local

				businesses yet highlights challenges in ensuring resident consultation and effective urban planning.
Brito and Zarrilli (2023)	Lisbon and Naples	Heritage Tourism	Comparative case study approach	This study investigates the role of tourism in regenerating peripheral neighbourhoods, comparing Alcântara in Lisbon and Bagnoli in Naples. The findings suggest that tourism can drive urban regeneration, but its effectiveness depends on local context and community engagement.
Madandola and Boussaa (2023)	Nigeria	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative research approach	This study seeks to investigate the role of cultural heritage tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development, specifically in the context of old Oyo town, Nigeria. The research concludes that while cultural heritage tourism can enhance local economies, it may also increase real estate values, potentially displacing residents and contributing to suburbanization.
Vardopoulos et al. (2023)		urban heritage tourism	Qualitative analysis through SOAR analysis framework	This paper describes an exploration in old city hostelrys on re-using historic buildings to create tourism accommodation, through a SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) analysis framework. The study found that adaptive reuse not only does serve cultural heritage preservation but also play roles in local economic development and environmental sustainability by reduced new construction demand.
Răţulea, Csesznek, Borcoman, and Sorea (2023)	Romania	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative research approach	This research is needed to uncover the potential of rupea as a cultural and heritage resource that not only provides insights into sustainable development, but new energy sources to transform rupea into a cultural landscape for local tourism-related activities while preserving the important characteristics of its buildings which keep getting developed in order to support urban regeneration activities.
Kowalczyk-Aniol (2023)	Poland	Built heritage tourism	Qualitative analysis.	The research was conducted to examine the nature of tourism-induced urban change and its social effects in a Central and Eastern European (CEE) city. It concluded that the above research

				findings elaborated that tourism initiates revitalisation and thus invites gentrification causing much significance to local communities and urban landscape.
Höftberger (2023)	Uzbekistan	Built heritage tourism	Comparative analysis	The research aim was to look at the study of notions of protection of the cultural legacy of the historic city of Khiva in Uzbekistan compared with the simultaneous processes of urbanization by applying the Historic Urban Landscape approach. It was concluded as demonstrated that although local authorities are keen to promote the image of a city/territory as a monumental heritage for tourism, the rest of the historical urban environment is still significant, and planning should be inclusive and involve the local people.
Y. Xiang, Loo, and Hale (2024)	Minyuan, China	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative research method	The research will endeavour to do so in order to critically assess the culture of the concession history and the significance of Tianjin residents' identity and memory. Based on the findings, the study uncovered local residents' everyday remembering and political imploded perspectives of Tianjin's postcolonial identities that disrupted prior narratives in historical writing and architecture restorations.
Boussaa and Madandola (2024)	Morocco	Cultural heritage tourism	Qualitative case study approach	The purpose of this research was to review the impact of cultural heritage tourism on urban revitalization; case study Fez Medina, Morocco as a model to explain the contribution of cultural heritage tourism towards sustainable development. The result showed that cultural heritage tourism has potential to boost the social and economic revitalisation of cities while maintaining cultural integrity, but it does raise methodical concerns over gentrification and displacement of the community.
Al-Ansari, Al-Malki, Boussaa, and Ferwati (2024)	Doha, Qatar	Cultural heritage tourism	Land-use analysis techniques	The study sought to establish how urban regeneration may be applied to old Al Ghanim in Doha, Qatar. It particularly sought to establish how embracing historical conservation in compliance with current lifestyle could be realized

				among the area. The study analysis indicates that 80 percent of the district is developed, while 47 percent of the developed percent developed are built-up and the remaining 53 are vacant confirming the need to renovate whilst promoting the cultural aspect.
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Review Structure

The review is structured around five key themes identified in the literature: (1) Urban policies and community participation in heritage tourism, which explores the influence of policies and community involvement in tourism initiatives; (2) Effective management practices in cultural heritage tourism, focusing on best practices for balancing conservation and tourism development; (3) Mechanisms of urban regeneration in heritage tourism, examining how heritage tourism drives urban renewal; (4) Socio-economic impact of environmental improvements on tourism, assessing the benefits of enhancements like waterfront revitalization; and (5) Tourist willingness to pay for heritage conservation, exploring factors that motivate financial contributions to heritage preservation (Figure 2). This thematic structure provides a comprehensive analysis of heritage tourism's role in urban regeneration.

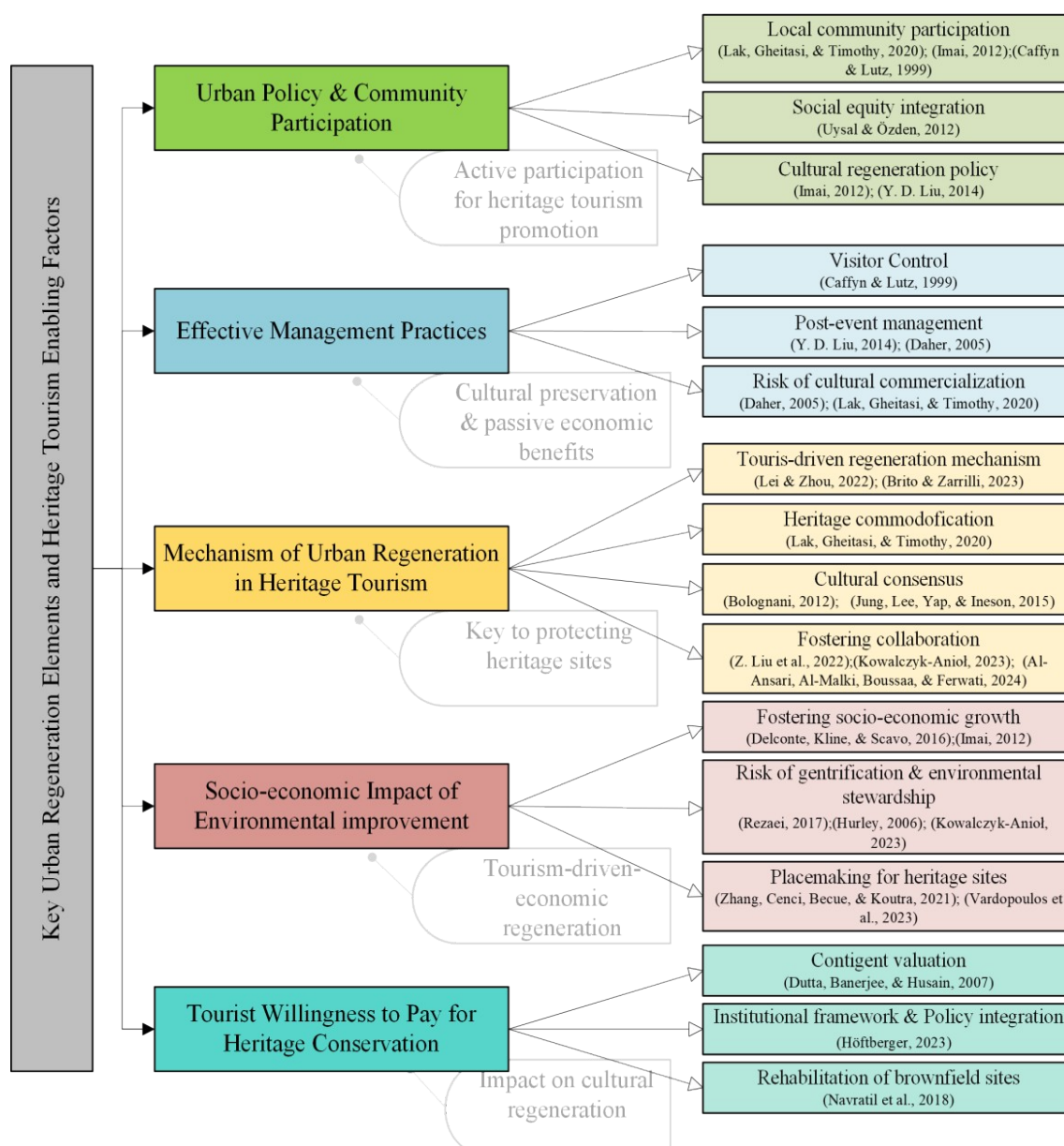


Figure 2: Literature Synthesis-Illustration of themes for sustainable urban regeneration

This systematic literature review, complemented by the synthesis diagram (Figure 2), reveals the intricate interplay between heritage tourism and urban regeneration. The findings underscore that urban policies, community participation, effective management practices, and tourists' willingness to pay for conservation are pivotal to driving sustainable tourism and urban renewal. The literature consistently highlights the importance of inclusive urban policies that promote active community engagement, social equity, and cultural regeneration. However, there is a noticeable gap in practical strategies for effectively integrating community participation into policymaking and governance.

Efficient management approaches are pivotal in harmonising cultural conservation with economic development. Research highlights that measures like visitor regulation, off-season tourism, and post-event strategies are vital for safeguarding heritage sites and supporting sustainable tourism. The visual representation also warns of threats such as cultural commodification, urging for governance that supports cultural value preservation. The pathways of urban regeneration via heritage tourism underscore the importance of stakeholder collaboration and robust policy structures to safeguard cultural landmarks. Socio-economic effects, spurred by ecological

enhancements, highlight tourism's dual capacity to drive economic expansion while introducing challenges like gentrification and ecological pressure.

Utilizing tourists' willingness to contribute financially toward heritage conservation is identified as a viable funding option, contingent on institutional support, policy alignment, and clear communication. Overall, the analysis and integration emphasize the importance of a comprehensive, future-oriented strategy that combines policy implementation, community engagement, responsible management methods, and socio-economic factors to ensure fair and enduring urban regeneration driven by heritage tourism.

3. Urban Policies and Community Participation in Heritage Tourism

The literature underscores the pivotal role of urban policies in fostering community participation, which is crucial for the success of heritage tourism. Caffyn and Lutz (1999) highlight the challenges faced in Birmingham, UK, where a lack of effective policies hinders community engagement, suggesting that more inclusive approaches could improve local support and tourism development. Similarly, Daher (2005) examines the donor-driven urban regeneration in Salt, Jordan, revealing limited sustainability due to inadequate local involvement and stressing the importance of balancing external aid with community participation. In Istanbul, Turkey, Uysal and Özden (2012) emphasize the need for urban policies that integrate social equity considerations to prevent tourism-led regeneration from undermining local interests. Bolognani (2012) reinforces this perspective by demonstrating that adaptable cultural policies in Balford, UK, enhance community involvement and tourism growth. Y. D. Liu (2014) extends this discussion by highlighting those policies fostering local cultural participation, such as those observed in European Capital of Culture events, significantly contribute to the success of heritage tourism across European cities.

Additionally, several studies provide diverse insights into the effectiveness of various policy approaches. Imai (2012) demonstrates that policies in Kawagoe, Japan, that combine community needs with heritage conservation led to sustainable outcomes. Zhao et al. (2020) explores urban policy frameworks in Chinese cities, finding that integrating local community voices into policy-making improves both heritage preservation and tourism development. Lak et al. (2020) discusses policy adaptations in urban areas affected by mass tourism, arguing that more flexible, community-centred approaches are essential for long-term success. Furthermore, Lei and Zhou (2022) examine the role of urban planning policies in managing heritage tourism in historic Chinese cities, suggesting that participatory planning practices that involve local stakeholders can mitigate conflicts and enhance tourism experiences. These studies collectively argue for urban policies that are inclusive, adaptable, and locally grounded to achieve resilient and sustainable heritage tourism development.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates a consensus on the need for urban policies that actively promote community engagement and adapt to local contexts to support heritage tourism. The studies emphasize the importance of integrating socio-cultural aspects into urban revitalization efforts that highlight the dynamic nature of historic urban premises. However, there is a noticeable gap in practical guidance on implementing these inclusive strategies. Future research should focus on developing actionable frameworks that provide specific policy tools and urban governance regime to ensure effective community participation in heritage tourism. The incorporation of this study could evolve the understanding of community participation in urban regeneration and emphasizing the need for policies that consider socio-cultural dynamics in urban heritage settings. This would help policymakers balance diverse stakeholder interests and address the dynamic challenges of urban regeneration in heritage tourism contexts.

4. Effective Management Practices in Cultural Heritage Tourism

The selected papers provide a diverse look into how cultural heritage tourism can be effectively

managed across different geographic regions. These studies converge on the central theme of balancing economic benefits from tourism with the need for cultural preservation. A case in point is Caffyn and Lutz (1999), who examine the management challenges in Birmingham, UK, where urban policies struggle to strike a balance between promoting tourism and conserving heritage sites. They advocate for the implementation of visitor controls and promoting off-peak tourism to mitigate the adverse effects of overtourism. Similarly, Russo and Borg (2002) analyse four European cities (Lyon, Lisbon, Rotterdam, and Turin) and find that integrating cultural tourism management into broader urban planning is essential for sustainable tourism growth.

Several papers focus on the role of cultural events and regeneration projects in tourism development.

Y. D. Liu (2014) explores how large-scale events like the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) drive tourism but emphasizes the need for post-event management strategies to ensure long-term cultural preservation. Z. Liu et al. (2022) add to this by categorizing tourism attractions in Hong Kong and advocating for tailored management strategies based on the type of attraction. They argue that flexibility in management practices is crucial for sustaining tourism growth without compromising the integrity of cultural heritage. Similarly, Lak et al. (2020) examine urban regeneration through heritage tourism in Iran, concluding that while tourism can revitalize urban spaces, without effective management, it risks commercializing and eroding cultural values.

Further focusing on urban regeneration, Daher (2005) and Imai (2012) highlight the importance of community involvement in tourism management. Daher (2005) examines Jordan's tourism-driven urban regeneration projects, finding that heritage management practices often lag behind tourism development efforts, leading to cultural commercialization. Imai's (2012) study of Kawagoe, Japan, supports this view, stressing that engaging local communities is vital for long-term sustainability in tourism and urban development. Hurley (2006) complements this by showing how public history narratives can shape tourism on the waterfront of St. Louis, reinforcing the need for locally grounded storytelling to enhance tourist experiences while preserving cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the literature underscores a shared concern for sustainable management practices in cultural heritage tourism, advocating for policies that integrate urban planning, visitor controls, and community engagement. It highlights the sustainable adaptive reuse of urban buildings into tourism accommodations, highlighting the balance between preservation and modern utilization. Therefore, these studies, while covering a wide range of regional and cultural contexts, emphasize that tourism management must be flexible, context-specific, and long-term oriented to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism do not come at the expense of cultural degradation.

5. Mechanisms of Urban Regeneration in Heritage Tourism

The reviewed papers offer insights into how heritage tourism can drive urban regeneration while highlighting the challenges of balancing economic growth with cultural preservation. Daher (2005) explores how heritage tourism in Jordan has become a central mechanism for urban renewal. However, the study reveals that tourism-driven regeneration often prioritizes economic objectives over cultural preservation, leading to the commodification of local heritage. This theme is echoed in Lak et al. (2020), which investigates urban regeneration in Birjand, Iran. While heritage tourism has revitalized the area, the authors stress that maintaining the authenticity of heritage sites is crucial to sustaining long-term cultural and economic benefits.

Several papers focus on the role of policy and governance in shaping heritage-led urban renewal. Zhao et al. (2020) argue that in China, political and policy networks significantly influence the success of heritage-driven development. The study finds that local governance can either facilitate or hinder effective conservation efforts. Similarly, Bolognani (2012) emphasizes that inconsistent cultural policies in the UK can weaken the impact of heritage tourism on urban regeneration, leading to disjointed development and cultural erosion. These findings underscore the importance of consistent policies and strong governance frameworks in managing heritage sites and ensuring that

urban regeneration efforts align with conservation goals.

Several studies also highlight the significance of community involvement and stakeholder collaboration in successful urban regeneration projects. Jung et al. (2015) and Simic et al. (2022) demonstrate that while heritage tourism can spark urban renewal, a lack of collaboration among stakeholders often limits the effectiveness of these projects. Both studies suggest that public-private partnerships and engaging local communities are essential for ensuring that regeneration projects benefit the local population while preserving cultural integrity. Boussaa (2015) adds to this by focusing on the sustainability of regeneration efforts in Doha, Qatar, arguing that integrating sustainability principles is key to protecting heritage sites during rapid urban growth.

Conclusively, the literature illustrated that heritage tourism can successfully drive urban regeneration, but the success of these initiatives depends on policy consistency, community engagement, and strong governance. Across diverse regions, including Jordan, Iran, China, and the UK, the studies emphasize the need for sustainable management practices to prevent the commercialization and degradation of cultural heritage. By fostering collaboration and ensuring long-term planning, heritage tourism can revitalize urban areas while maintaining the authenticity and integrity of cultural sites.

6. Socio-Economic Impact of Environmental Improvements on Tourism

The papers collectively provide valuable insights into how environmental enhancements can foster socio-economic growth through tourism while also revealing critical challenges related to sustainability and equity. Hurley (2006) and Imai (2012) provide foundational insights into urban revitalization projects in St. Louis and Kawagoe, respectively, where environmental enhancements, such as water quality improvements and cultural heritage preservation, are used as tools for tourism-driven economic regeneration. Both studies highlight the tension between economic development and social equity, particularly noting the risks of gentrification and cultural degradation in redeveloped urban areas. While Hurley (2006) focuses on the benefits of improved recreational spaces, Imai (2012) stresses the importance of community participation in ensuring that tourism growth aligns with cultural and environmental sustainability.

The subsequent studies, including those by Delconte et al. (2016) and Rezaei (2017), shift the focus toward the socio-economic contributions of tourism to local communities. Delconte et al. (2016) explore the role of local arts agencies in fostering both community development and environmental improvements, illustrating how cultural initiatives can enhance tourism while promoting sustainability. Rezaei (2017), on the other hand, examines the perceptions of residents in Yazd, Iran, concerning the environmental and socio-economic impacts of tourism. This qualitative study underscores the mixed feelings of local populations, who benefit economically from tourism but are concerned about the environmental toll on local resources. Both studies highlight the need for a balanced approach that accounts for the environmental costs of tourism while maximizing socio-economic benefits.

The more recent studies (Brito & Zarrilli, 2023; Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2023; Vardopoulos et al., 2023; T. H. Xiang & Mohamad, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021) expand on these themes by exploring innovative approaches to heritage conservation, placemaking, and urban transformation. Zhang et al. (2021) and Vardopoulos et al. (2023) investigate the regeneration of industrial heritage sites, revealing that while such projects can stimulate tourism and economic revitalization, they often require careful planning to avoid environmental degradation. Similarly, Kowalczyk-Anioł (2023) challenges conventional tourism-driven urban transformation models, arguing for a more integrated socio-environmental perspective. The papers collectively suggest that while tourism can serve as a powerful driver of socio-economic development, its long-term success depends on addressing environmental sustainability and ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed across communities.

These studies underscore the complexity of managing tourism as a vehicle for both economic

growth and environmental stewardship, highlighting the need for holistic approaches that consider socio- economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Therefore, the papers conclusively discuss that while environmental improvements can significantly drive socio-economic development through tourism, these initiatives require a carefully balanced approach to avoid exacerbating social and environmental inequities. The studies demonstrate that tourism-driven urban revitalization and heritage conservation projects have the potential to generate substantial economic benefits, yet they also highlight the persistent challenges of gentrification, cultural erosion, and environmental strain. To achieve sustainable and equitable growth, it is essential to ensure that both inclusive and environmentally responsible tourism development must be guided by integrated and participatory planning, which actively engages local communities, mitigates negative environmental impacts, and ensures socio-economic benefits are broadly distributed. Ultimately, the research advocates for a more integrated approach to tourism development, one that aligns environmental stewardship with long-term socio-economic resilience.

7. Tourist Willingness to Pay for Heritage Conservation

The reviewed papers collectively explore the potential of leveraging tourists' financial contributions to support heritage preservation. In the context of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration, the financial sustainability of conservation initiatives is a major challenge. Therefore, one emerging approach is leveraging tourists' willingness to pay for heritage and cultural preservation, which is not only supports site maintenance but can also contribute to broader urban regeneration efforts. Hence, Dutta et al. (2007) provide a foundational analysis through their contingent valuation study in India, demonstrating that tourists, particularly those with higher education and awareness, are willing to pay for heritage conservation. However, the study highlights the challenges of capturing this potential due to inadequate marketing and communication strategies. Similarly, Höftberger (2023) emphasizes the need for institutional frameworks and policy integration to effectively utilize tourists' willingness to pay for sustainable tourism and conservation efforts. Höftberger (2023) underscores bureaucratic challenges and the lack of coordination between stakeholders as significant barriers to realizing the potential for willingness to pay as a sustainable funding source. Navratil et al. (2018) expand the discussion to environmental tourism, focusing on how willingness to pay can support the rehabilitation of brownfield sites. Their findings reveal that tourists are willing to contribute to the regeneration of environmentally degraded areas, but the balance between economic development and environmental safety remains a critical concern. Y. Xiang et al. (2024) examine the role of cultural attachment in influencing tourists' willingness to pay in Tianjin, China, showing that tourists with stronger emotional connections to heritage sites are more likely to contribute financially. However, the authors caution that relying solely on tourist contributions without government or institutional support may lead to financial instability in long-term conservation efforts.

In summary, these papers highlight the significant potential of tourist *Willingness to Pay* for heritage conservation, but they also stress the need for improved communication, robust policy frameworks, and coordinated institutional efforts to ensure sustainable outcomes. While tourists are generally willing to pay for the preservation of cultural and environmental assets, the success of this approach depends on addressing operational challenges and integrating *willingness to pay* into broader conservation strategies. The research collectively suggests that *willingness to pay* can be a valuable tool for heritage conservation if properly managed and supported by long-term planning and governance.

8. Gaps and Challenges in Heritage Tourism-Led Urban Regeneration

Across all themes, the paper identifies critical gaps and persisting challenges, including the risk of gentrification, culture commoditization, and the marginalization of local communities (see Figure 5). This integrated framework for community participation, and a longer-term consideration of

socio- economic and environmental dimensions presents substantial challenges to achieving equitable regeneration. Drawing from comparative case studies or approaches (e.g., participatory urban design, heritage trusts) in regions where innovators have met such challenges, could further enhance these findings. Moreover, emphasizing the potential for interdisciplinary research to address these gaps could also offer a guide for future research.

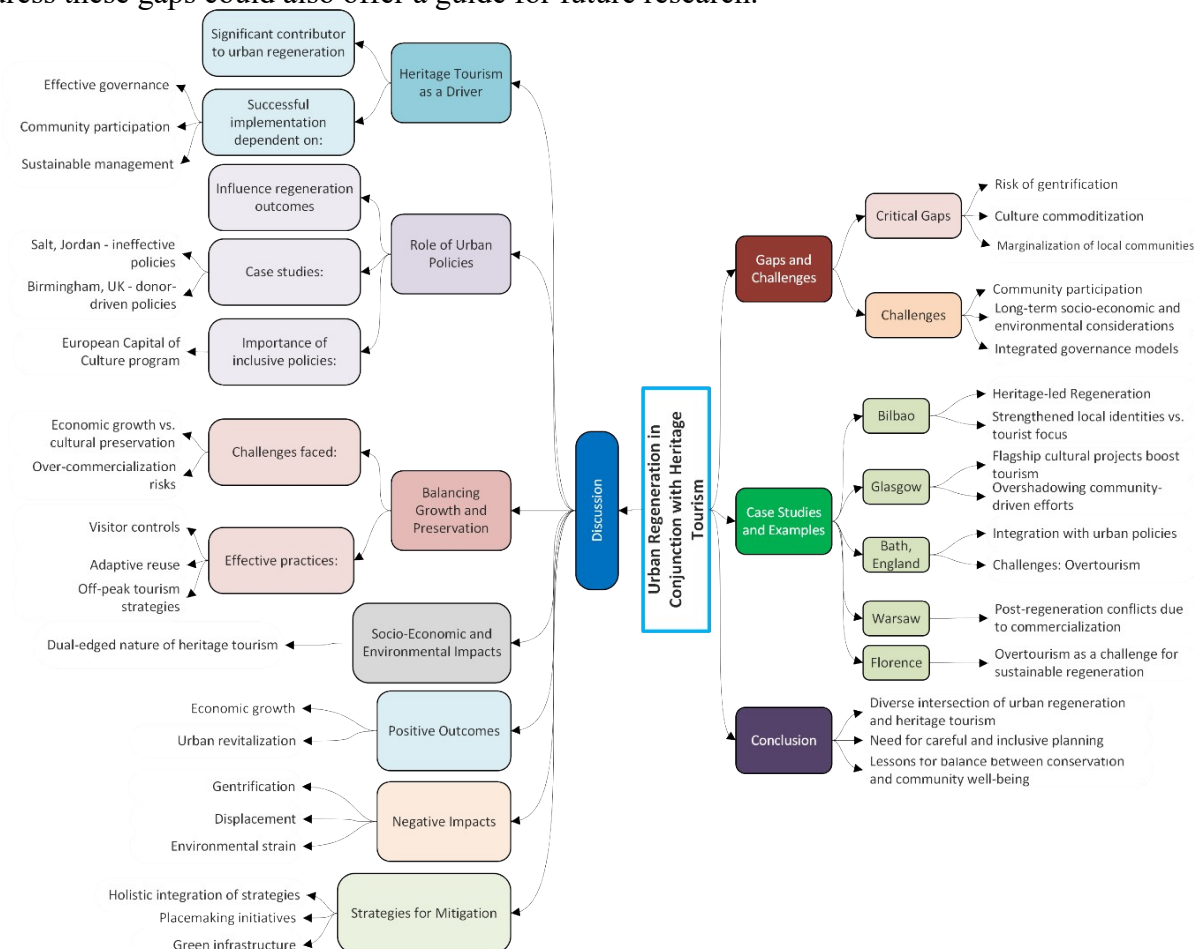


Figure 5: Illustration of findings, and critical gaps and challenges identified through systematic literature review

9. Discussion

This systematic literature review reveals that heritage tourism is a significant driver of urban regeneration, yet its success is contingent upon effective governance, community participation, and sustainable management practices (refer Figure 5). Urban policies play a pivotal role in shaping regeneration outcomes, as evidenced in cities like Salt, Jordan (Daher, 2005) and Birmingham, UK (Caffyn & Lutz, 1999), where ineffective or donor-driven policies hindered community engagement. Conversely, initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture program (Y. D. Liu, 2014) highlight that inclusive policies and participatory frameworks can foster local ownership and align cultural preservation with urban development goals. However, a persistent gap remains in translating policy intentions into actionable strategies that prioritize equity, cultural sensitivity, and local agency. Addressing this requires integrated governance models that empower local communities and ensure policies are adaptable to diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Balancing economic growth with cultural preservation emerges as a recurring challenge in heritage tourism management. Effective practices such as visitor controls, adaptive reuse, and off-peak tourism strategies have proven instrumental in mitigating over-commercialization and preserving site integrity (Lak et al., 2020; Russo & Borg, 2002). Yet, findings from regions like Jordan and

Iran reveal that mismanagement risks the erosion of cultural authenticity, while communities may experience marginalization amidst tourism-driven economic gains. A collaborative approach that includes public- private partnerships and active community participation is essential for long-term sustainability.

Context-specific management practices must align economic imperatives with the safeguarding of cultural values, ensuring that heritage tourism serves as a catalyst for inclusive urban regeneration.

The socio-economic and environmental impacts of heritage tourism underscore its dual-edged nature. Environmental enhancements, such as waterfront revitalization in St. Louis (Hurley, 2006) or adaptive reuse of heritage sites (Vardopoulos et al., 2023), contribute to economic growth and urban revitalization. However, these projects often exacerbate gentrification, displacement, and environmental strain, raising concerns about equity and sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires holistic strategies that integrate socio-economic benefits with environmental stewardship. Placemaking initiatives and green infrastructure can help mitigate negative impacts while fostering urban resilience, ensuring that the benefits of regeneration are equitably distributed among communities.

Tourists' *willingness to pay* for heritage conservation presents a promising financial mechanism for supporting urban regeneration. Studies highlight those factors such as education, cultural attachment, and effective communication influence tourists' willingness to contribute (Dutta et al., 2007; Y. Xiang et al., 2024). However, realizing the full potential of *willingness to pay* requires robust institutional frameworks, clear policy integration, and strategic marketing to engage stakeholders. By leveraging *willingness to pay* in combination with government support and community-based initiatives, heritage tourism can achieve self-sustaining conservation models. This integrated approach, coupled with inclusive policies and sustainable management, can address the multifaceted challenges of heritage tourism, ultimately promoting equitable and long-term urban regeneration.

Moreover, many studies have discussed the issues in context of heritage tourism and regeneration where the functionalities of the heritage core have been critically examined. Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge emphasizes in Bilbao's revitalization where heritage-led regeneration strengthens local identities while attracting global tourism, though critics warn of prioritizing tourists over local communities (Graham, Ashworth, & Tunbridge, 2016). Miles and Paddison highlight how flagship cultural projects and events boost heritage tourism-led regeneration in Glasgow, while criticized for overshadowing smaller, community-driven efforts (Miles & Paddison, 2005). Similarly, for heritage city of Bath, England, Smith explores the integration of heritage tourism into urban policies to combat urban decline, emphasizing sustainable development alongside cultural preservation, but faces overtourism as challenge for policymakers (Smith, 2007). Whereas, on preservation of cultural pride of Warsaw, experiences post-regeneration conflicts through commercialisation (Logan & Reeves, 2011). While Richards discusses cultural tourism- regeneration in Florence, overtourism become another challenge for policymakers for displacing sustainable regeneration (Richards, 2018).

Conclusively, from these studies, scholars illustrated the diverse ways in which urban regeneration and heritage tourism intersect, however, challenges such as displacement, overtourism, and the commodification of heritage underscore the need for careful and inclusive planning. Each approach offers lessons for creating regeneration strategies that balance conservation, community well-being, and sustainable tourism.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the paper offers a comprehensive synthesis of the role of heritage tourism in urban regeneration, supported by robust evidence from diverse contexts. Its observations are insightful, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges inherent in leveraging heritage tourism for sustainable urban renewal. By incorporating more actionable insights and exploring innovative

practices, the paper could significantly contribute to advancing the discourse on heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. Further research that prioritizes practical applications, stakeholder-centric frameworks, and long-term sustainability strategies would strengthen the theoretical and practical implications of this work.

Based on the insights from the literature, there are multiple recommendations proposed to guide future research, policy development, and practical applications in the field of heritage tourism and urban regeneration. Firstly, policymakers should develop strategies that actively promote community engagement and adapt to local contexts. Inclusive policy frameworks that integrate social equity, cultural regeneration, and diverse stakeholder involvement are crucial for effective heritage tourism. There is a pressing need for future research to focus on formulating actionable tools and governance models that facilitate community participation. Addressing these dynamic challenges can help create a balanced and sustainable approach to urban regeneration.

Secondly, sustainable management practices are essential for maintaining the integrity of cultural heritage sites while reaping economic benefits. Tourism management must be flexible, context-specific, and oriented toward long-term goals. Implementing visitor controls, promoting off-peak tourism, and adopting post-event management strategies can prevent the over-commercialization of heritage sites. Additionally, urban planning should integrate cultural tourism management to support ongoing preservation efforts.

Thirdly, stakeholder collaboration is another vital aspect of heritage tourism-led urban regeneration. Public-private partnerships and active community involvement ensure that regeneration projects not only preserve cultural integrity but also benefit local populations. Transparent governance and meaningful community consultation can foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the success of these initiatives. Fourthly, tourism development must adopt a holistic approach to environmental improvements. By promoting environmental stewardship and ensuring equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits, tourism can serve as a tool for both urban revitalization and cultural conservation. Incorporating placemaking strategies into tourism development plans can further support the creation of sustainable urban environments.

Furthermore, leveraging tourists' *willingness to pay* for heritage conservation offers a promising financial mechanism for supporting preservation efforts. Policymakers and tourism managers should capitalize on this potential through robust marketing strategies, clear communication, and supportive policy frameworks. However, institutional support and coordination are crucial for integrating *willingness to pay* into broader conservation strategies, ensuring a stable financial base for long-term heritage preservation.

Lastly, future research should explore several critical areas to support the effective integration of heritage tourism and urban regeneration. A primary focus should be on the practical applications of community engagement strategies, assessing the impact of different governance models in various cultural and socio-economic contexts. Research is needed to identify best practices for engaging local stakeholders in decision-making processes, particularly in urban areas with diverse populations. Investigating how different methods of community consultation and participation influence the outcomes of urban regeneration projects would provide valuable insights into creating more inclusive and adaptive policy frameworks.

Another significant area for future research is the long-term socio-economic impacts of tourism-led urban regeneration. Studies should delve into how heritage tourism can contribute to sustained economic growth while preserving cultural integrity and avoiding negative outcomes such as gentrification and displacement of local communities. This includes exploring the role of tourism in enhancing local economies, creating employment opportunities, and fostering a sense of cultural pride among residents. Additionally, research could evaluate the effectiveness of various socio-

economic models in balancing economic benefits with cultural preservation in different urban settings.

Further, research should examine the effectiveness of different tourism management practices in preserving heritage sites. Comparative studies that analyse the outcomes of strategies such as visitor controls, off-peak tourism, and post-event management in diverse heritage contexts can help identify the most effective approaches for maintaining site integrity. Investigating the integration of cultural tourism management into urban planning processes is another vital area, as it may reveal new ways to ensure that tourism development aligns with long-term conservation goals.

Environmental aspects also warrant further study. Research should assess the environmental impacts of heritage tourism and explore strategies for incorporating environmental stewardship into tourism development plans. This includes analysing how placemaking strategies can contribute to sustainable urban environments, examining the role of environmental improvements in tourism-driven regeneration, and exploring methods to equitably distribute socio-economic benefits derived from such developments.

Additionally, future research should explore the potential of leveraging tourists' *willingness to pay* for heritage conservation. Investigations could include identifying the factors that influence WTP among different tourist demographics and testing various marketing strategies to effectively communicate the importance of heritage preservation. Research could also assess the integration of *willingness to pay* into broader conservation strategies, exploring institutional and policy frameworks that can support a stable financial base for long-term preservation efforts.

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