

# **ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURISM: A CREATIVE APPROACH**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This theoretical paper conceptualises the role of tourism providers in facilitating creative tourism experiences by focusing on their ingenious enterprise, which we argue can help capture the tourism potential of intangible archaeological heritage. Intangible archaeological heritage can be understood as knowledge emanating from actors' own interpretation of archaeological sites that have either become physically inaccessible or been destroyed since the initial exploration. Archaeological heritage is often equated with tangibility, which results in an omission of experiences that intangible archaeological heritage can offer. By proposing a rethinking of the archaeological tourism framework, we argue that the touristic value of both tangible and intangible archaeological heritage is better realised and can be further utilised to study the easily overlooked aspect of providers' ingenuity.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Archaeological tourism fails to capture the intangibility of archaeological heritage.
- •
- Creative tourism is proposed as a more suitable framework for archaeological tourism.
- •Co-creation between tourists and providers is central to achieving creative tourism.
- •A proposed framework underlines providers' creativity in delivering memorable experiences

**KEYWORDS:** archaeological heritage; creative tourism; co-creation; cultural heritage

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper underlines how the commodification of archaeological sites and the use of particular cultural imageries can be attributed to the dynamism inherent in local enterprise. Further, since current frameworks of archaeological tourism are focused largely on tangible dimensions of archaeological heritage, they tend to bypass monuments and sites which have lost their materiality. Yet, these sites continue to attract tourist interest due to compelling story-telling and creative ingenuity of tourism providers. In this sense, a revised archaeological tourism framework that can account for different dimensions of archaeological heritage and how they are made saleable is called for. Thus on one hand, the discussion presented here accentuates the tourism potential of intangible aspects of archaeological heritage, and provides insights into how they play a significant role in delivering memorable tourism experiences. On the other hand, it is argued that engaging with tourism providers' creative skills and a constructivist approach to cultural heritage interpretation can facilitate a better understanding of their efforts at (re)creating site-specific meanings.

Broadly, archaeological tourism is defined by tourist visits and activities taking place at celebrated places (e.g. historic landmarks, monuments and excavation sites) and partaking in the experience their physicality engenders (Pacífico & Vogel, 2012; Ramsey & Everitt, 2008; Willems & Dunning, 2015). This definition underlines the archaeological site as a central piece in archaeological tourism and is sustained on the conventional classification of archaeological heritage as tangible (see UNESCO, 1972, 2003). However, this approach fails to capture fully both tourism potential and historical significance of archaeological sites that have lost their materiality. For instance, salvage interventions undertaken during an environmental impact assessment not only result in an appraisal of the physical loss of the original archaeological site, but also reveal the socio-cultural and historical value inherent therein (Holtorf & Kristensen, 2015; Willems, 2008). These interventions generate significant knowledge about sites that have been rendered physically inaccessible, therefore intangible. For example, construction of large dams enables both the identification and an examination of the significance of ancient sites located along river basins before their submersion on completion of the dam (Adams, 2007; Brandt & Hassan, 2000; WCD, 2000). The intended development on such sites inevitably results in their physical loss and/or inaccessibility, but associated record-keeping helps in retaining their essence. In this paper we use the term *intangible archaeological heritage* to denote both inaccessible and immaterial forms of archaeological heritage that has lost its tangibility. We underline that this should not be

confused with intangible cultural heritage which relates to traditions and *living* expressions (e.g. knowledge, skills and social practices) transmitted from one generation to the next (UNESCO, 2003).

It is common to find the loss of archaeological heritage portrayed in a negative light and affecting its touristic value adversely (e.g. Banks, Snortland, & Czaplicki, 2011; Garrett, 2010; Niknami, 2005; WCD, 2000). Although preservation of archaeological remains should be a priority, their destruction or physical inaccessibility as a consequence of the construction of development projects is not necessarily an entirely negative phenomenon. In fact, it can be argued that a sole focus on preserving material objects and monuments draws more attention to the physical properties of heritage rather than its incorporeal significance and subtle meanings it embodies (Holtorf, 2015). Further, an emphasis on the conservation of cultural heritage overlooks the fact that it is not static, but undergoes a continuous course of transformation and (re)creation in the meaning-making process.

Hence, we contend that once material ruins are lost, actors' creative imagination and ingenuity become key in developing intangible archaeological heritage, now encapsulated in historical knowledge and stories about the place. Thus the 'essence of place' is still retained and the historical meaning of archaeological heritage is not lost entirely even after the material remains have perished. They are reconfigured and animated with new connotations in accordance with ". . . the values, uses or interpretations of the past that each group of stakeholders associates with the site" (Woynar, 2007, p. 38). Yet, conceptualisations of archaeological tourism built around the conventional definition of tangible archaeological heritage tend to sideline tourism experiences associated with archaeological heritage in its intangible form. Thus, we suggest that an experience-centred approach to archaeological tourism which draws upon creative tourism research that underlines the co-creative interface between tourists and providers may help resolve the dilemma posed by the lack of tangible archaeological remains.

Creative tourism is a growing subject of research that foregrounds tourists' creative expression in producing memorable experiences (Richards, 2011, 2014; Richards & Raymond, 2000). From the supply perspective, in a creative tourism framework the role of tourism providers becomes that of facilitators of memorable experiences rather than mere suppliers of services or goods (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Prentice & Andersen, 2007). It can be argued that growing interest in interactive and bespoke tourism experiences is linked to a fundamental shift in marketing towards a service-dominant logic that gives prominence to a

proactive interaction between firms and consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). From this perspective, consumers' prior knowledge, expectations and experience as well as providers' skills play an essential part in determining and co-creating the value of the product (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

In the context of archaeological tourism, a co-creation perspective entails the active participation of tourists, providers and archaeologists in the process of interpretation and making sense of the past (Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014; Moscardo, 1996). Each group of actors plays a vital role in creating the co-creative tourism experience. The premise is that through co-creation, actors' values, their unique interface with each other and with the essence of archaeological heritage, can help add value to the site and deliver cherished experiences irrespective of the presence or absence of archaeological remains (Woynar, 2007). In other words, it is the cultural and historical values associated with heritage's essence that are used as a main resource for facilitating memorable experiences, not the monuments themselves. Moreover, by highlighting actors' personal experience rather than archaeological remains, a co-creative approach may help overcome the downsides of archaeological heritage loss that is inevitable in the face of infrastructure development.

However, there is significant lack of research concerning the role of tourism providers in devising creative tourism opportunities, especially regarding the skills applied when engaging with unconventional cultural resources such as intangible archaeological heritage. Broadly, archaeological tourism providers can be described as those actors who use archaeological heritage (including relics, historic remains and prevalent myths) as the main resource to develop tourism experiences. Thus these include tour guides who interweave anecdotal evidence with the scripted and rehearsed narratives about the site to bring it alive, tour operators offering cultural tourism holidays, and managers and marketers who oversee the interpretation and marketing of heritage. To date, most research concerning the role of these providers has been based on the assumption that archaeological heritage is a tangible resource (Mortensen, 2014; Pacifico & Vogel, 2012; Willems & Dunning, 2015). But one of the limitations with the conventional approach is that it does not examine providers' role in developing creative tourism experiences despite the absence of tangible archaeological remains. Given this scenario, key questions to consider are: how can tourism providers approach archaeological heritage when its main asset (tangibility) is unavailable? What are the differences (or similarities) between using tangible and intangible archaeological heritage to facilitate creative tourism experiences?

Moreover, what type of skills do providers need in order to deliver creative archaeological experiences?

The aim of this paper is to address these questions theoretically by arguing in favour of reconsidering conceptual frameworks within which creative tourism has been examined so that it can accommodate different forms of archaeological heritage. We propose a creative tourism framework that highlights roles, relationships and processes between tourists, providers and archaeological heritage and explains how these differ when the focus is on either tangible or intangible forms of archaeological heritage. To develop our framework, we begin by critically reviewing research on creative tourism and its role in generating memorable tourism experiences, focusing in particular on the aspect of co-creation from the providers' perspective. In arguing for a rethinking of the creative tourism framework, the emphasis is on theorising creativity in tourism and examining constructivist vs positivist approaches to cultural heritage interpretation. We conclude the paper by outlining the value of co-creation perspective in utilising archaeological heritage in its intangible form to create memorable creative tourism experiences.

## **2. CREATIVE TOURISM AND MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES**

Preservation of archaeological monuments in their original site feeds the tourism industry by providing cultural resources which can inform the development of tourism products, services and experiences (McKercher, Ho, & du Cros, 2005). However, in cases where archaeological heritage is present but rendered physically inaccessible, an unconventional approach to tourism development that appeals to creativity is necessary. Thus, it is imperative to rethink ways intangible archaeological heritage could help develop and deliver creative tourism opportunities and experiences. The following section reviews research in the field of creative tourism in a bid to explore avenues in which the ingenuity of providers may engender memorable and creative tourism experiences.

### *2.1 A critical review of current creative tourism frameworks*

The growing emphasis on the use of local culture in different destinations has more or less led to the saturation of the cultural tourism market (Richards, 2014). Such “serial reproduction of culture” (Richards & Wilson, 2006, pp.1210) has triggered an increase in consumer demand

for novel tourism products that enhance the destination experience. Thus as a way of differentiating the destination and gaining competitive advantage, experience-centred approaches to cultural tourism provision have gained currency (Richards & Raymond, 2000). Consequently, it is not surprising to see instances where cultural tourism providers are developing opportunities that allow consumers greater freedom to participate and design their own experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). This trend where consumers assume the centre stage and providers become facilitators of the tourist experience is termed “creative tourism” (Richards & Raymond, 2000). Creative tourism is defined as travel directed towards an engaged and authentic experience with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place (UNESCO, 2006). Authors consider these “do-it-yourself” experiments as a key indicator of wider changes sought by tourists who question and challenge their position within the tourism industry (Fuller, Jonas, & Lee, 2010; Lovelock, 2004).

The drive to partake in authentic experiences which stimulate their imagination and creative potential enables tourists to experience a sense of fulfilment and self-expression which is not possible in conventional cultural tourism experiences (Richards & Raymond, 2000; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Tan, Kung, & Luh, 2013). Within this context, providers’ role becomes that of a facilitator empowering tourists’ productive development rather than supplying services that target their “mindless enjoyment” (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008; Prentice & Andersen, 2007, p. 90). Thus creative tourism experiences are co-created and co-performed by tourists and providers through a range of participatory activities that encourage the development of skills and self-expression through visitors’ interest and engagement with local cultural elements (Richards, 2011). Creative tourism providers are therefore expected not only to guide tourists, but also participate in crafting imaginative travel experiences. The following section delves further into the concept of co-creation with an emphasis on the role of tourism providers in co-creating tourism experiences.

## *2.2 Co-creation angle in studying creative tourism*

The concept of co-creation has gained momentum with the emergence of service-dominant logic in the marketing and management fields (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006, 2008). From this perspective, it can be argued that value is not embedded in the product itself, but derives from

consumers' perception of what makes the experience memorable and personally satisfying. Thus consumers become vital players in the process of value-making and enhancing product appeal by means of their skills, expectations and prior knowledge, which have been named *operant resources* (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Operant resources influence the consumption experience by acting upon *operand resources* (e.g. physical goods, such as raw materials). Operant resources are most efficient when a co-creation approach to value making is employed. This underlines that value derives from a process of interaction between providers and consumers rather than being exclusively product based (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In this sense, providers gain competitive advantage once they understand and tap into consumers' operant resources (i.e. prior knowledge and skills, expectations about the product, previous experience of similar products) as a way of enhancing the overall experience.

Based on existing literature, the concept of co-creation in cultural tourism highlights both active participation of tourist and tourist-provider interaction as key dimensions (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Campos, Mendes, Valle, & Scott, 2015; Prebensen & Foss, 2011). Co-creation in tourism experiences is defined as “the sum of the psychological events a tourist goes through when contributing actively through physical and/or mental participation in activities and interacting with other subjects in the experience environment” (Campos et al., 2015, p. 23). In this sense, cultural tourism experience is enhanced when tourists' operant resources are allocated in the interpretation process, making the encounter more meaningful (Moscardo, 1996). Thus tourists can be involved in co-creating a tourism experience by actively participating in the co-production process, by engaging with heritage at a psychological and emotional level, and by choosing to explore certain aspects of heritage according to their interests (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). Moreover, evidence suggests that tourists' satisfaction is increased when heritage tourism experience enables them to relate to the archaeological site at personal and emotional levels (Calver & Page, 2013; Chronis, 2012; Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2003).

Indeed, whilst tourists' operant resources influence the way they negotiate, manage, even imagine and value their interface with the locality, cultural tourism providers' key role in mobilising such allocation is undeniable (Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2014). Increasingly, as authors point out, providers are taking note of these elements and tailoring their service to deliver bespoke experiences for visitors (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Mathisen, 2012; Prentice & Andersen, 2007). However, despite the fact that studies on creative tourism span a decade, creative enterprise and ingenuity of providers remains inadequately understood, as do

the interpretational frameworks they deploy in defining place ethos and its appeal. Often, the 'logic of market' that commodifies the meaning of a place and its heritage takes precedence over place essence produced through providers' interpretation and subjective experience. Pfanner's (2011) study is one of the few which examines how creative tourism becomes a means of achieving an authentic archaeological experience because of the co-creativity element it provides. The author underlines how the simple act of sieving for artefacts at Shakespeare's House, in the United Kingdom, allows them to experience congruity with the poet's living space. Whilst visitors' subjective experiences (re)make the site through a process of imagination and interpretation, culturally inspired creative tourism at this locality has become possible because of providers' ability to craft and offer "uniquely framed contact with the place" (Coleman & Crang, 2002, p. 2). Nevertheless, as with most studies on archaeological tourism, Pfanner's work focuses on interaction with tangible resources.

Similar instances where providers engender what Anderson (2012) terms "the coming togethers of place and practice" (p. 584) are apparent in experiences that involve manual activities, such as learning to cook local dishes or master handcrafts, which provide an outlet for tourists to develop their creative skills. In fact, providers in these cases are creative entrepreneurs who, with their craft, are able to stimulate meaningful experiences and imbue a grand sense of purpose to otherwise mundane aspects of cultural tourism (Raymond, 2007; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Tan et al., 2013).

In yet other cases, creativity required of providers is less focused on their skills and expertise and more on the way they choose to develop experiences based on cultural and creative resources available (Mathisen, 2012; Prentice & Andersen, 2007). For instance, cultural events such as music festivals (Edwards, 2012; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2009; Prentice & Andersen, 2003) can attract large numbers of creative people whose dynamism can drive the re-imagining of the destination brand place-based initiatives. Also, designations such as the European Capital of Culture (Liu, 2014) or UK's City of Culture status which Hull in North Humberside region enjoys currently can serve as a marker of exclusivity and help shape promotional stimuli and the profile of new products and services. Thus creativity aimed at keeping alive the materiality of sites is multi-faceted.

Research on creative tourism indicates actors' operant resources and co-creation as central components that set creative tourism apart from other kinds of tourism experiences. Nonetheless, these components have been studied mostly with regard to tourism experiences



based on elements of *living* culture, such as gastronomy and handcrafts. In this sense, there is significant lack of theorising that examines the potential of creative tourism to enhance unconventional cultural elements, such as archaeological heritage in its intangible form. Likewise, theories of creativity have received limited attention in the theorising of co-creative tourism, as well as the creative role of providers and their strategies of heritage interpretation. The next section will therefore examine how developments in these areas can expand our understanding of providers' role in tourism co-creation and propose a revised framework for co-creative archaeological tourism that can accommodate both tangible and intangible forms of archaeological heritage.

### **3. RETHINKING THE CREATIVE TOURISM FRAMEWORK**

As we underline in the previous section, creative tourism research has overlooked novel forms of heritage including intangible archaeological heritage. In addition, it has failed to account for diverse forms of creativity. Thus, a pivotal dimension around which we argue for a rethinking of the creative tourism framework lies in our emphasis on the dynamism inherent in the concept of creativity and assessing critically its use in packaging and promoting elements of archaeological heritage. This section draws upon research on creativity and heritage interpretation in order to propose a co-creative archaeological tourism framework that can integrate both tangible and intangible forms of archaeological heritage.

#### *3.1 Theorising creativity in tourism*

Despite much research, the definition of creativity itself remains somewhat ambiguous. Creativity is a concept that has many applications and been approached from a large number of disciplines, making it difficult to put forth a universal definition (Klausen, 2010). Nevertheless there is general consensus that creativity involves the ability to produce something: 1) new, such as original ideas and 2) and meaningful or useful to its creator (Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). In general, it can be argued that research on the typology of creativity follows two distinct paths: little-c creativity and Big-C creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). The former refers to the everyday creative activities of people in their daily lives, such as learning to play a musical instrument (Richards, 2010). The latter

is used in labelling the work of those individuals who excel and create a long lasting mark in their domain, such as Einstein or Beethoven (Gardner, 1993).

However, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) suggest two additional types: mini-c and Pro-c creativity (Table 1). In this case, mini-c creativity is linked to the process of learning at an initial stage, such as a student learning a drawing technique already established in the art domain (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). This helps in distinguishing between the creative acumen of a learner from someone who applies little-c creativity to draw as a hobby. ). In other words, while little-c creativity emphasises creative expression, mini-c is about the personal processes of creative interpretation (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). On the other side of the spectrum, Pro-c creativity categorises people who undertake creative activities at a professional level, but have not yet achieved remarkable Big-C contribution in their domain. For instance, a professional chef is likely to have an added creative ability than someone who enjoys experimenting with dishes at home, despite not having made a significant creative contribution in the culinary domain.

Type of creativity	Definition	Domain-specific or general	Motivation	Found in
Mini-c	Creative interpretation associated with the intrapersonal process of learning	Likely both	Mostly intrinsic	Anyone
Little-c	Everyday creativity applied in daily problem-solving or hobbies	Likely both	Mostly intrinsic	Anyone
Pro-c	Creative contributions that do not effectively or significantly change the domain	Mostly domain-specific	Both intrinsic and extrinsic	Anyone or Experts
Big-C	Creative breakthroughs that have changed the course of the domain in which they have been made	Domain-specific	Both intrinsic and extrinsic	Experts

**Table 1.** Four types of creativity (adapted from Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

Examining cultural tourism using the Four-C model, we argue that mini-c creativity is expressed when, for example, in the process of learning to sieve for artefacts at Shakespeare’s House, tourists connect with the site’s history and the sense of place in a subjective manner. Little-c creativity can be required to set up a small-scale tourism attraction, for example a

family-owned museum that only opens for weekend visits. On the other hand, Pro-c creativity is applied by tourism providers who identify successful services in other destinations and are inspired to create something similar in their own destination, such as a local exhibition on archaeological heritage. Finally, Big-C creativity is required in order to develop products and events that shape the way the whole cultural tourism industry is perceived, i.e. worldwide attractions such as Disneyland or widespread services like the open top red sightseeing coach tours. These examples demonstrate how different types of creativity underlie and influence the creation of place image and tourism experiences.

A review of theoretical frameworks reveals the multifarious manner in which human attributes that promote creative thinking and the creative process are studied (Amabile, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1999). Given the broad application of the concept of creativity, the notion can be considered to comprise of four categories: the creative person, the creative process, the creative environment, and the creative product (Rhodes, 1961). Indeed, some of the foremost theories have built on the assumption that creativity results from an interplay of multiple elements, such as personal motivation, domain skills, creative ability, prior experience or social interaction (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1996; Gruber & Davis, 1988; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). One theory relevant for the purposes of our argument is the investment theory of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1996). This theory maintains that creative individuals are those who are open to unpopular but potentially worthy ideas and are willing to work on improving them, ultimately leading to an increase in the value and popularity of the original idea. For instance, an entrepreneur who adapts or emulates an already popular product does not denote extraordinary creative skills, even though (s)he may be doing great business. However, if (s)he decides to invest in a little known resource or develops a product that is not in high demand, what might appear initially to be an out-of-touch business move may come to be seen as highly creative if the product becomes popular (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991). Thus an essential trait of creative people is their ability to stand against the crowd whilst developing something that has widespread appeal (Sternberg, 2012).

We argue that the role of tourism providers in co-creative archaeological tourism is parallel to the workings of the investment theory of creativity. It implies that when providers develop products or experiences based on tangible archaeological heritage, they are willing to pay a high price because the risk of failure is small. On the other hand, investing in unpopular, undervalued or intangible archaeological resource does not appear in the first instance to be the

most effective way of attracting tourists. Nonetheless, the risk of underwhelming visitors is offset by a possibility of economic gains if the endeavour turns out to be successful.

According to the investment theory of creativity, the process of value-making is determined by the confluence of six resources: a) intellectual skills of the individual; b) knowledge about the domain; c) thinking styles that favour creativity; d) personality traits that encourage a stand against mainstream; e) intrinsic motivation based on love for the task; and f) an environment that is supportive of creative ideas (Sternberg, 2012). By employing these resources in a balanced way, creative individuals improve their chances of increasing an idea's popularity and value. In other words, an investment in the form of personal involvement and operant resources activation is necessary to make the most of intangible archaeological heritage potential for tourism. For instance, applying a co-creation approach that ties in with constructivist approaches to cultural heritage interpretation can provide ways to realise the investment required to make the most of intangible archaeological heritage. The discussion now focuses on how constructivist interpretation strategies may realise such potential.

### *3.2 Positivist vs constructivist approaches to cultural heritage interpretation*

Research on the subject of interpretation and learning has shown a broad distinction between the way that information is conveyed and assimilated in positivist and constructivist approaches to heritage interpretation (Copeland, 2006; Hein, 1998). It is to be noted that heritage interpretation is defined as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships (...) rather than simply to communicate factual information” (Tilden, 1977, p. 8).

The positivist approach focuses on experts' perspective (i.e. archaeologists' interpretation of the historical site) which visitors are encouraged to accept as representative of the truth (Hein, 1998). Positivist interpretation of heritage assumes an objective view of the past and foregrounds the role of experts whilst simultaneously muting the voices of non-specialists (i.e. visitors) (Carman, 2002; Copeland, 2006). This approach can constitute a less attractive way of disseminating and preserving archaeological heritage since the elements of what comprises (or should comprise) the 'heritage of a place' are determined by archaeologists and experts, downplaying the role of local communities and visitors (Smith, 2006).

In contrast, the constructivist approach to cultural heritage interpretation emphasises the participatory process of making sense of the past (or multiple pasts) eschewing a single

absolute angle on the past (Copeland, 1998). This approach adopts a relativist perspective implying that meanings of the past are constructed subjectively as visitors engage with historical elements (Shanks & Hodder, 1995). Heritage interpretation becomes an iterative and creative process of assimilating new information and interpreting material culture in an active and imaginative fashion (Tilley, 1993a). Thus, a constructivist approach to heritage interpretation stimulates visitors' creative ability and acknowledges their prior knowledge as key in the meaning-making process. When examined in the light of cultural tourism activities, it appears that the principles of co-creation and the principles of constructivist heritage interpretation overlap conceptually as both require creative thinking and hands-on participation by parties involved (Minkiewicz et al., 2014; Moscardo, 1996).

Authors propose several strategies that can inform heritage interpretation from a constructivist perspective (see Hein, 1998; Moscardo, 1996; Tilden, 1977; Tilley, 1993b; Uzzell, 1989). The key emphasis is on promoting a holistic engagement with the archaeological site, encouraging interaction with primary evidence and importantly, tapping into visitors' prior knowledge with a view to stimulating critical thinking and reflective discourse (see Table 2).

Strategy	Description
Holistic presentation of the archaeological site	Providers should highlight “big” concepts over details, which can then be viewed by visitors not as unique or special but rather “as part of a wider historic environment” (Copeland, 2006, p. 89). Arguably, an understanding of a greater chronology or the broader historical context plays a larger role in making sense of the world than details about a specific archaeological monument.
Encourage interaction with primary evidence	Providers should present visitors with primary evidence (tangible or intangible) in order to enable first-hand interpretation and encourage them to come up with their own questions. Thus the focus is not on presenting information to visitors but rather on finding the most appropriate pieces of evidence to maximise interpretation.
Tap into visitors' knowledge of the past	The experience should act as an enhancer of visitors' prior knowledge, a point which underlines the importance of consumer assessment (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Understanding visitors' own conceptions of the past allows to better tailor the experience to their expectations. Nevertheless, new ideas should also be introduced as these encourage critical and creative thinking.
Emphasise provocation over instruction	Instead of offering ready-made facts, providers should aim to develop problem-solving situations that require critical thinking and allow several approaches and interpretations. This increases the level of visitor participation and places the spotlight on visitors' own experience. Care is required not to oversimplify the archaeological site and present visitors with challenging but solvable situations.

Encourage discourse	Discussion can facilitate the meaning-making process and the assimilation of new concepts and ideas about the past. Visitors should be given voice and encouraged to present their own ideas and share their interpretation with fellow visitors and guides. This interaction will provide opportunities for subjective (and thereby memorable) construction of the past.
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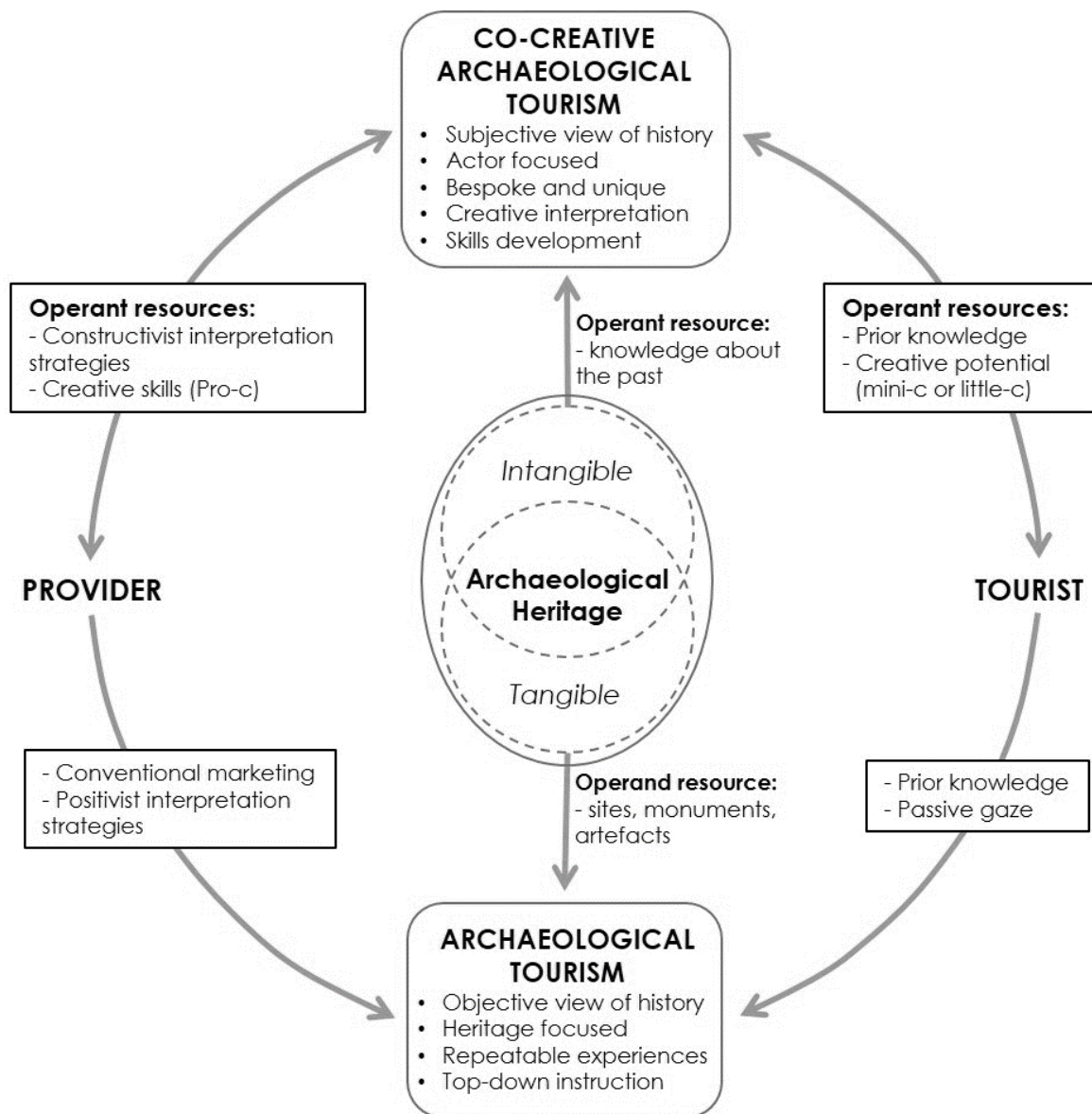
**Table 2.** Constructivist strategies for cultural heritage interpretation (adapted from Copeland, 2006).

From the strategies summarised in Table 2, we see that a co-creative archaeological tourism experience may be enhanced by adopting constructivist interpretation strategies. Constructivist strategies provide valuable insights for interpreting intangible archaeological heritage by informing the creation of situations that allow tourists to construct their own meaning of the past. Furthermore, they are key in alleviating the sense of loss owing to the destruction or physical inaccessibility of sites or monuments inasmuch as the lack of tangible archaeological remains does not necessarily inhibit the interpretation process.

Taking these ideas on constructivist heritage interpretation and the conceptual constructs of creativity and co-creation reviewed earlier, the next section presents an aspirational creative tourism framework that can enhance the role of intangible archaeological heritage in the delivery of memorable tourism experiences.

### *3.3 A framework for co-creative archaeological tourism*

Drawing from the theoretical insights on creativity and constructive approaches to heritage interpretation discussed above, Figure 1 presents a framework for co-creative archaeological tourism that both expands current theorising on co-creative tourism and addresses some of the shortcomings of current frameworks. If one considers operant resources as the fundamental source of competitive advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 7), the service-dominant logic may shed light on the potential of intangible aspects of archaeological heritage and thus reduce the predominance of tangible archaeological heritage in current theorising of archaeological tourism.



**Figure 1.** A framework for co-creative archaeological tourism (Source: authors).

While archaeological heritage is primarily an operand resource (i.e. tangible and inert, consumed through site visitation), our framework shows that in addition to, or even without interaction with actual tangible monuments, tourists' and providers' experience can transform it into an operant resource (i.e. mobile and co-created). It is the process of interaction between operant resources from providers, tourists and heritage itself that (re)defines a place's essence and bestows upon it unique meanings embodying the site's intangibility (Carman, 2009; Mire, 2007). Co-creative archaeological tourism thus shifts the value away from tangible heritage to the manner in which knowledge about the past is experienced and co-created by providers and consumers. In this sense, by drawing attention to the process of archaeological discovery,

creative tourism providers may work around the absence of materiality and facilitate bespoke experiences. This perspective sheds light on hitherto ignored providers' ingenuity in co-creating and delivering creative tourism experiences utilising their aesthetics, skills and heritage interpretation techniques to encourage sense making of the past, issues that remain under-theorised in conventional archaeological tourism.

Strategies of constructivist heritage interpretation also come to the fore here. Tour guides often resort to storytelling and problem-solving using landmarks in the surrounding landscape to illustrate episodes of local human occupation in the past (Hansen & Mossberg, 2017). By doing so, they are providing a holistic presentation of an archaeological monument in its wider landscape and historical context. This strategy can be transferred to cases where an archaeological monument is inaccessible and tangible primary evidence is missing. For example, a local quarry may provide the pretext for exploring the life of prehistoric communities who also undertook mining activities in the region. Similarly, wine makers may relate present wine making processes to the techniques of the past. More hands-on activities such as cooking workshops could use local intangible archaeological heritage to tap into the growing popularity of the paleo-diet concept and offer a more fulfilling culinary experience. These examples resonate with advances in public archaeology that promote a more co-creative approach in archaeology and demonstrate how a nuanced understanding of the locality can be achieved through dialogue and collaboration (Bollwerk, Connolly, & McDavid, 2015; Means, 2015). Archaeological tourism providers could look into these advances and apply a similar logic in order to offer bespoke experiences that incorporate tourists' knowledge and encourage critical/creative thinking.

On the other hand, applying the Four-C creativity model to analyse creativity applied by tourism providers when considering intangible archaeological heritage suggests a type of Pro-c creativity. Providers are required to approach intangible archaeological heritage in a creative way in order to develop fulfilling tourism experiences. Thus, while a standard guided tour to an archaeological monument is common product model, telling the story of a destroyed or flooded monument calls for greater creative input from providers. For instance, in order to expand upon a monument that has been physically lost, a tour guide may ask tourists of their knowledge about similar monuments and elaborate on that input. This allows the guide to supply references that can help tourists construct an image of the lost monument. Although the product of such creative endeavours may not represent a significant contribution to the tourism industry in absolute terms, tourism providers may nevertheless achieve a level of creative



expression and ability that surpasses common product development in conventional forms of archaeological tourism. Tourists in turn would absorb new information and apply their mini/little-c creative skills to co-create new meanings about the region's past.

As we pointed out earlier, the role of tourism providers in co-creative archaeological tourism can have strong parallels to the principles of the investment theory of creativity. Investing in a little known intangible archaeological resource can be high risk, but may represent a smaller cost to tourism providers since the resource lacks its traditional value for archaeological tourism (i.e. its tangibility) and requires instead an individual's cogency and creative skills rather than substantial capital. In sum, we argue that by focusing on a co-creative approach to archaeological tourism, the value of intangible archaeological heritage in creating new business opportunities is considered and providers' role better appreciated.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This paper is intended to open an enquiry into the potential of intangible archaeological heritage as an operant resource in tourism that can not only enhance the appeal of a place, but also set in motion creative processes for tourism providers to develop new products. By focusing on the role of tourism providers from a co-creation perspective, we underline their resourcefulness as key in realising the tourism potential of archaeological heritage in situations where its tangible dimension is unavailable. The creative tourism framework that we suggest may offer new insights for tourism providers to increase revenue, as well as open different perspectives to other actors whose work is linked to the conservation and dissemination of archaeological heritage (Moore, 2005). The paper provides an initial platform for examining the untapped potential of local creativity and ingenuity in archaeological tourism and its capacity in generating new and alternative forms of social and cultural expression.

The theoretical merit of this paper lies in providing a framework to examine providers' creativity and their role in co-creating the archaeological tourism experience. In particular, the approach to conceptualising creativity using Kaufman and Beghetto's Four-C model (see Table 1) and Sternberg and Lubart's investment theory proposed here has practical value. Significantly, it calls upon tourism providers to apply and improve upon their creative skills consciously with a view to making intangible archaeological heritage or indeed any imperceptible tourism phenomenon as a stimulus to achieving inspired story-telling. Such an approach implies the need for a reassessment of providers' business strategy in the light of

creative interpretation required for marketing the ethereal appeal of intangible archaeological heritage. To this end, training programs may be an option in enhancing providers' skill at communicating complex, tacit and symbolic site-specific meanings (Nickerson, 1999; Weiler & Walker, 2014).

Furthermore, creative tourism development could bring new opportunities for the dissemination and conservation of archaeological heritage affected by urban and industrial expansion, and provide the public and local communities with novel ways of consuming and interacting with their past and heritage. This is in line with an increasing popularity of the use of creativity as means of adding value to cultural and archaeological heritage (Brown, Snelgrove, & Veale, 2011; Morin, 1999; OECD, 2014). For developers responsible for large-scale construction projects the value of archaeology as an operant resource also cannot be underestimated. For instance, by sponsoring creative tourism experiences around it they might be able to legitimise their presence in fragile eco-systems and culturally significant communities.

Nonetheless, this study has limitations. First, the co-creative archaeological tourism framework presented currently lacks empirical validation. Future studies are necessary to test the potential of the framework in the light of empirical data and assess providers' skills and creative faculty in developing and delivering co-creative archaeological tourism experiences.

Second, a constructivist approach prioritises first-hand interpretation with primary evidence. Since interpretation of intangible archaeological heritage inevitably takes place without on-site interaction or tangible cues, there is further pressure on tourism providers to explore and engage with tourists' operant resources. Nevertheless, the brand value that history and archaeology hold in popular culture may be key in this aspect (Holtorf, 2007; Lowenthal, 1985; Melotti, 2011). For example, constructivist interpretation highlights the importance of creating bridges between heritage and tourists by exploring references from tourists' cultural background or from popular culture. In this sense, it can be argued that the ubiquity of archaeological themes found throughout popular media such as cinema and television could support a creative approach to archaeological tourism.

Finally, although this paper has focused mainly on discussing providers' role in setting the stage for creative experiences, questions can also be raised concerning tourists' demand and relationship with intangible archaeological heritage. It is possible that visitors may not engage with the site if the interaction with the actual tangible heritage is lacking. In this case,

tourists' operant resources – creative potential, prior knowledge and expectations – will play a fundamental role in the success of this kind of experience. Going back to the Four-C creativity model, creative tourism capitalises mainly on tourists' little-c or mini-c creativity and assumes that every person is creative to some extent and can take part in activities that require creative skills (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2009; Richards, 2010). In other words, events experienced in creative tourism are new and meaningful for the tourist but unlikely original at a broader level. Likewise, perhaps only tourists who are particularly creative or who are emotionally attached to the past may find intangible archaeological heritage enjoyable or worthy of their time and money. In this sense, mapping the creativity and skills applied in comprehending tangible and intangible archaeological heritage will generate a better understanding of the nature of tourists' operant resources and their bearing for co-creative archaeological tourism experiences.

To conclude, this paper contributes to existing debates examining cultural and archaeological tourism from creativity angle and presents a framework that foregrounds the role of creative enterprise to explore imaginative tourism uses for archaeological heritage that has been physically lost.

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