



World Heritage / Patrimoine Mondial

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Supervisor of thesis: Anna Catalani, Lina G. Tahan

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■ Please provide a 500 words abstract outlining your thesis; you may wish to attach a table of contents or any other relevant material:

This dissertation is concerned with the tourism potential of the Ancient Silk Roads. Since the independence of the former Soviet States in Central Asia and with the increasing efforts by the Chinese government to promote heritage in order to boost national pride, there has been a revival of the Silk Road for tourism purposes. Also, the region is receiving support from international organisations, such as UNESCO and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) to promote tourism and to prepare the nomination of the Silk Road as a Serial Transnational World Heritage Site.

However, level of development of the different countries in relation to tourism is uneven and the implications of this nomination have not been studied. For this, the main aim of the study is to analyse the tourism potential of the Ancient Silk Roads in China and Central Asian countries in the context of contemporary tourism.

The methodology used has involved secondary data analysis from the United Nations and UNWTO statistics data, which provided an overview of the countries plus an inventory of tourist attractions. In addition, a survey was conducted with emailed questionnaires sent to tour-operators offering tours to destinations along the Silk Road, focusing on Central Asia and China. They were asked about the profile of their clients, their concerns when offering the tours and the implications of the nomination as a World Heritage Site.

The research shows that the Silk Road is very rich in natural and cultural heritage, testimony of several centuries of trade and intercultural exchange between civilisations, but tourist facilities still need to be further developed, especially in Central Asian countries. Survey results demonstrate that the majority of tour-operators believe that the nomination as a World Heritage Site would cause an increase of tourists on the region, although better promotion is needed. For this, an integrated and common vision that shows the Silk Road as a unique destination, with a wide array of natural, cultural and intangible heritage, and that creates a 'sense of place' must be sought for the promotion and enhancement of the tourism potential of the Ancient Silk Roads.

Nevertheless, further research is required in order to reach a wider audience - tour-operators, local communities and the public sector - and to confirm the current results.

■ Thematic Structure (max. 5)

<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Routes and Itineraries, Linear Heritage (Routes, Canals, Railways, Rivers, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Built Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage and Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Earthen Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Geological Heritage
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Centres and Cities, Historic Urban Landscapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Forests
<input type="checkbox"/> Military / Defence & Maritime Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Deserts
<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial, Technological, Astronomical & Scientific Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity
<input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine and Coastal Heritage
<input type="checkbox"/> Modern and Contemporary Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Heritage
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Landscapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rock-Art
<input type="checkbox"/> Underwater Heritage / Archaeology	<input type="checkbox"/> Research on Materials Conservation and Mechanics
<input type="checkbox"/> Museums, Museology & Moveable Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Education, Training, Youth and Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Tourism & Ecotourism
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral & Intangible Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Legislation (National and International), Conventions, Charters and Declarations
<input type="checkbox"/> Languages and Toponymy	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Impacts on Heritage

<input type="checkbox"/>	Genealogy and Heraldry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restoration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:		