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Review of the doctoral dissertation

Qihang Qiu, MSc

entitled „The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Place Making”.

Doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of

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and

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Formal basis for the preparation of the review

The legal basis for conducting the review was the resolution of the Scientific Council of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, No. 043/2023/2024, dated May 10, 2024, regarding the appointment of a reviewer in the procedure for awarding the doctoral degree to Qihang Qiu, MSc. The review was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Article 187 of the Law on Higher Education and Science of July 20, 2018, as amended. According to the regulations, a doctoral dissertation should present the candidate's overall theoretical knowledge in the discipline and demonstrate the ability to conduct independent scientific work. The the doctoral dissertation should be an original solution to a scientific problem. The doctoral dissertation may consist of a collection of thematically related published scientific articles.

The scientific achievement submitted for review is a collection of thematically related scientific articles that form the core part of the doctoral dissertation entitled "The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Place Making." The dissertation consists of two main parts. The first part is Self-report, while the second part of the scientific achievement comprises the series of four related articles published in 2022 and 2023.

At the beginning of the reviewed work, an acknowledgment is placed, followed by a table of contents and a list of the four scientific articles that form the series of related publications. Further on, a Self-report is included, which comprises the following chapters: Introduction, Justification for Discussing ICH in Tourism Place Making, ICH: From Planning Material to Marketing Tool, Research Results Documenting the Doctoral Student's Direct Contribution to the Publication Being the Basis of the Dissertation, Discussion, Summary and Conclusions, Bibliography. This is followed by Summary and Keywords in Polish, and Summary and Keywords in English. The subsequent part of the work includes annexes in the form of the four articles that make up the series of related publications and annexes with authorship statements indicating the contribution of the authors to the publications. The entire work consists of 111 pages, including the annexes. The Self-report comprises a total of 39 pages (with bibliography) and includes 11 figures and a bibliography with 103 entries.

The following four scientific articles are attached to the work:

Article 1. Qiu, Qihang, Yifan Zuo, and Mu Zhang. Intangible cultural heritage in tourism: Research review and investigation of future agenda. *Land* 11.1 (2022): 139. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11010139>. Ministerial Points: 70 (1.12.2021), Impact Factor: 3.905 (2021 Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics, 2022)).

Article 2. Qiu, Qihang, Xiaomei Liang, and Yifan Zuo. Identifying European and Chinese styles of creating tourist destinations with intangible cultural heritage: A comparative perspective. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 25.2 (2023): 266-278. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2567>. Ministerial Points: 100 (1.12.2021), Impact Factor: 4.6 (2022 Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics, 2023)).

Article 3. Qiu, Qihang. Identifying the role of intangible cultural heritage in distinguishing cities: A social media study of heritage, place, and sense in Guangzhou, China. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 27 (2023): 100764. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100764>. Ministerial Points: 140 (1.12.2021), Impact Factor: 8.4 (2022 Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics, 2023)).

Article 4. Qiu, Qihang, and Yifan Zuo. “Intangible cultural heritage” label in destination marketing toolkits: Does it work and how? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 56 (2023): 272- 283. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.06.025>. Ministerial Points: 100 (1.12.2021), Impact Factor: 8.3 (2022 Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics, 2023))

Evaluation of the Scientific Achievement

In my review, I will first assess the Self-report, and then address the related series of scientific articles. The Self-report presents, among other things, the research problem, the objectives, methods, and the research process and results, based on thematically related scientific articles that form an integral part of the scientific achievement under evaluation.

In point 2.1. of the Self-report, Qihang Qiu, MSc first justifies how Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is related to Human Geography. The author correctly demonstrates that culture is linked to space and place, emerging from them on one hand, and shaping these elements on the other. She then explains that culture includes both tangible and intangible elements common to a specific group of people. The intangible elements, passed down through generations, are known as intangible cultural heritage (ICH). These include oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, traditional craftsmanship, etc. The author correctly identifies several premises indicating the strong connections between ICH and human geography. Firstly, natural environments impact ICH in terms of creation customs, land use, games, sports, rituals, etc., in different ethnic and social groups living in different places. Secondly, ICH can produce tangible and physical spaces such as archaeological sites, architecture, museums, artifacts, etc. Here, we see the shaping of places and geographical spaces in a material dimension by ICH. Thirdly, the author identifies the connections between ICH and human geography in conferring a unique character to a location, where ICH becomes a distinctive emblem representing the uniqueness of the place.

The author correctly highlights the links between ICH and human geography, simultaneously proving that the research problem (described later in the Self-report) is a subject of interest in geographical research. My critical remarks concern the insufficient presentation of issues related to place and space. Both the concept of geographical space, its various dimensions, and the concept of place are significant issues in human geography. Including a discussion on these concepts, describing the divisions and differences, and relating them to ICH in the introduction would have been beneficial at this point in the work.

In the next section (2.2.), the author first emphasizes, despite the connections between ICH and human geography, this issue has been the subject of broader geographical research only in the last twenty years (p. 6). The doctoral candidate further situates the research issue at the intersection of human geography, tourism management, and cultural studies. As the author writes on p. 8,

“This dissertation addresses tourism and destination planning on the basis of ICH resources. In the realms of human geography, tourism management, and cultural studies, unraveling ICH’s functions in tourism place making can start with materials and then move to planning and outcomes. Place making is the fundamental planning mechanism, with destination marketing and management representing results and ICH serving as the raw material and catalyst (i.e., ICH ignites the planning process).”

Then, Qihang Qiu detailed the research purposes (in point 2.2.2.), which included:

1. To understand the value of ICH and popular ICH resources.
2. To identify the tourism place making process while integrating ICH resources.
3. To confirm ICH’s role in differentiating a city and ultimately serving as a destination marketing and management tool.

The doctoral candidate assigned three research questions to research purposes, each corresponding to the articles included in the publication cycle:

1. Which ICH resources have been discussed most extensively in recent years, and what are the prevailing research trends and future directions in ICH tourism? (article 1)
2. How can ICH be effectively employed for tourism place making? (article 2)
3. Does ICH have the capacity to render a place distinct, and if so, then how? (article 3); How does the labeling of ICH contribute to destination marketing? (article 4).

In my opinion the author appropriately formulated the research problem expressed in research purposes and research questions presented in the Self-report.

The research methods employed included literature analysis, meta-analysis, content analysis based on Tripadvisor reviews, and a questionnaire survey. A detailed presentation of the methods and materials used in the study is provided in section 2.4. of Self-report with reference to the individual articles.

In my opinion, the author correctly identified the intersection of ICH and human geography. She presented the research problem in a detailed and accurate manner, which undoubtedly has an original character. The stated research purposes are properly formulated and well-connected. The research questions, in turn, are a logical consequence of the proposed objectives, possess internal coherence, and are related to the published texts of four scientific articles.

The next part of Self-report (2.3. ICH: From Planning Material to Marketing Tool) is theoretical and based on the literature review. In section 2.3.1. ICH as Valuable Planning Material, the doctoral candidate presents an analysis of ICH as a resource used in planning of the development of tourist destinations. The author explained what is understood by the term ICH from the perspective of regulations by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the National Heritage Board of Poland (NHBP), and the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China (CPGPRC). The author also discussed the role of ICH in tourism development, the concept of ICH tourism, and its place within the cultural tourism. It seems that this section should have more broadly addressed the concept of heritage in general, dividing it into tangible and intangible heritage. Against this backdrop, ICH should have been described. I also expected a discussion in this section on the role of interpretation in selecting specific types of heritage as resources for place-making in

tourism. The issues of heritage interpretation and who makes the interpretation and selection of heritage elements as resources for place-making are significant research themes in heritage analysis also within human geography.

In the subsequent section (2.3.2. ICH in Place Making), the author first defined the concept of place-making in a geographical context. I believe the doctoral candidate did this in a detailed and thoughtful manner. Qihang Qiu presented place-making as a sense of place, intrinsic characteristics of a place, and the emotional attachment that people experience to a specific place. On the other hand, the author also highlighted the understanding of place-making as an institutional industry focused on planning (top-down approach) that relies on communities, planning departments, and sustainability. She referred to publications by renowned geographers such as Professor Rob Kitchin and Professor Nigel Thrift. Particularly noteworthy is her attention to the division of place-making by the American tourism geographer Alan A. Lew. He distinguished between place-making (organic and unplanned human actions) and placemaking (planned and intentional global theming by governments and tourist authorities). Furthermore, he identified three main tools of place-making: tangible (landscapes, buildscaapes, etc.), intangible (mindscaapes, storyscapes), and mixed. The doctoral candidate then explained the role of ICH in place-making within its intangible, tangible, and mixed tools. Summarizing this part of the analysis, the doctoral candidate emphasized that the conducted research confirmed the potential of ICH within tangible, intangible, and mixed place-making tools.

In the next section of Self-report (2.3.3. ICH in Destination Marketing and Management), the doctoral candidate presents ICH in the context of destination marketing and management. Qihang Qiu correctly points out that various elements of ICH (traditional performances, myths, festivals, etc.) enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations and distinguish some places from others. According to Qihang Qiu, ICH serves as a specific promotion and brand label that can influence people's travel decisions and motivations. In this section, I expected a broader reference to the concept of destination marketing, which was lacking.

In the further part of the work (2.4. Research Results Documenting the Doctoral Student's Direct Contribution to the Publication Being the Basis of the Dissertation), the author, presented the research results in a synthetic manner, drawn from the four articles that make up the attached publication cycle. She referred to the previously posed research questions and presented the methods, data sources, and results concerning each of the four articles.

The first article from the reviewed scientific achievement is titled "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism: Research Review and Investigation of Future Agenda" and was written by Qihang Qiu, Yifan Zuo, and Mu Zhang. The article was published in 2022 in the journal *Land* (MDPI), which has an impact factor. The doctoral student declared a 92% contribution to the creation of this article. The publication addresses the first research question regarding which ICH resources have been discussed most extensively in recent years and what the prevailing research trends and future directions in ICH tourism are. The publication is theoretical and based on literature analysis, mainly scientific articles and conference materials indexed in the Web of Science (WOS) database. The aim of the publication was to determine the current state of scientific knowledge regarding Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism (ICH Tourism) based on a literature analysis. The analysis included identifying the main concepts related to ICH Tourism, research trends, and future research directions. Additional research questions refining the article's issues were also posed. These included determining when the articles and conference publications related to the analyzed topic were published, from which countries the case studies originated, in which journals and conferences they were presented, and what their citation rates were. Another group of research questions aimed to determine the dominant issues addressed in the publications, the methods used by the authors, and the indicated future research

directions. The research gap identified in the introduction of the article concerns the lack of a comprehensive assessment of the state of knowledge in the field of ICH Tourism.

The article analyzes 418 publications on the topic of ICH Tourism, published between 2000 and 2021. A significant increase in the number of publications in the studied period was noted. Most articles addressed the categories of intangible cultural heritage, oral traditions and expressions, and social practices, rituals, and festive events. The publications originated from different continents (Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia), from both developed and developing countries. The article highlights three main research threads. The first thread concerns the resources used in ICH Tourism and sustainability. Issues discussed include the selection and valorization of resources used to create ICH Tourism, critically describing the inclusion on the UNESCO list to indicate the most valuable ICH elements. The article describes the creation of ICH Tourism development plans, the role of authenticity in tourism development, and the necessity of a sustainable approach to ICH Tourism development.

The second thread addresses the impact of ICH-related tourism on places, people, and the ICH itself. The authors emphasize that ICH leads to spatial changes, such as the creation of tourist facilities based on these resources (museums, cultural sites, open-air museums), and landscape management according to local and regional traditions and culture. The positive impacts of ICH tourism development and promotion on local communities (integration, increased interest in local culture), authorities, and institutions are described. Negative effects of tourism on ICH, such as excessive commercialization of resources or distortion of the message, are also indicated.

The third research thread concerns the motivations and behaviors of tourists participating in ICH Tourism and the impact of this form of travel on territorial marketing. In this case, the significant role of ICH Tourism in shaping a place's brand and territorial promotion is emphasized. The article identifies leading international journals such as *Sustainability*, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, and *Annals of Tourism Research*. It also highlights the increasing citation rate of articles on ICH Tourism. In the concluding part of the article, future research directions in ICH Tourism are presented. The most important include studies on the potential of ICH in the placemaking process. It is noted that ICH offers a range of new tools for the placemaking procedure, which can be used in brand creation and territorial marketing. ICH forms the basis for developing tourist products and attractions, creating experiences, associations, and emotions related to a place, making it a powerful tool for promotion and branding. The authors emphasize the significance of this research thread and the limited number of studies published in this area to date. The third important thread for future research is the analysis of the possibilities of using modern technologies, mainly IT, to create interactions between destinations developing based on ICH Tourism and current and potential tourists. Other important topics worthy of broader investigation include sustainability issues in ICH Tourism, including reducing adverse environmental, community, and cultural impacts.

The analysis in the article "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism: Research Review and Investigation of Future Agenda" by Qihang Qiu, Yifan Zuo, and Mu Zhang is of high quality and makes a significant contribution to the development of science in the field of ICH Tourism. In my opinion, the article is a well-documented study based on an analysis of international literature. The research objectives were clearly defined and achieved. The article addresses the research question posed in the Self-report of the reviewed doctoral dissertation. A research gap was identified and effectively filled, undoubtedly adding scientific value to the publication.

In the subsequent section, the Self-report presented conclusions drawn from the second article included in the publication series. The article is entitled "Identifying European and Chinese styles of creating tourist destinations with intangible cultural heritage: A comparative perspective," it is authored by Qihang Qiu, Liang Xiaomei, and Zuo Yifan. The article was published in 2023 in the *International Journal of Tourism Research*, a Wiley publication with

an impact factor. The doctoral student declared a 93% contribution to this article. The research question addressed by the publication was how ICH can be effectively employed for tourism placemaking.

Similar to the previous publication, this article is theoretical and is relying on literature analysis, primarily articles indexed in the Web of Science database. The main objective was to develop a framework for the process of placemaking using Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and to present similarities and differences in the approach to placemaking in Europe and China. The extensive international comparison involving 17 European countries and China is noted as one of the strengths of the article. The study included an analysis of publications on placemaking processes using ICH (meta-analysis of information from research articles). The selection of publications was based on carefully chosen keywords, covering articles presenting 23 case studies from European countries and 16 case studies from various regions of China, spanning the years 2005-2021. The analyzed articles focused on aspects such as who planned the placemaking process, what type of intangible cultural heritage was utilized, whether the process focused on project or activity, spatial dimensions, scale, scope, and objectives.

This article first provides theoretical background for further analysis, describing the concept of placemaking, defining its characteristics, and presenting different approaches. The authors specify placemaking as a process of creating the spirit and identity of a place based on actions associated with its ICH. They emphasize that creating human associations, emotions, relationships, and connections with a place based on ICH is an element of placemaking in terms of creating a sense of place. On the other hand, placemaking has a material dimension associated with planning and creating durable, tangible elements institutionalized to manage and achieve specific benefits in place spaces through concrete planning actions. The article also highlights the difference in approaches to placemaking based on the publication "Tourism Planning and Place Making: Place-making or Placemaking" by A.A. Lew (2017), published in the journal *Tourism Geographies*. The cited author observes the difference between grassroots organizational approaches primarily community-driven to the described process, which he defines as placemaking, and institutionalized (top-down) approaches termed as placemaking.

Finally, the authors point out three consequences of placemaking in tourism: material, immaterial, and mixed. In the first case, material results are achieved through the utilization of ICH, including the creation of tourist trails, theme parks, and technological elements facilitating ICH selection. The second case involves immaterial effects such as associations with a place, a specific perception through ICH, emotions, feelings associated with a place, etc. The third type of consequences includes actions combining material and immaterial aspects.

The article presents, the framework of placemaking processes using ICH in tourism. In this case, various categories of process planners (governmental, non-governmental, mixed), different types of ICH, the concentration of the process on project or activity, profile (transect), target place, objectives of placemaking activities (including social changes among the local population, environmental protection, education and research, religious rituals, economic development, infrastructure development, art, culture, entertainment, etc.), main project aspect (design focus), and main types of placemaking (standard, creative, strategic placemaking), as well as place identity (sense of place – positive, negative, mixed), are identified.

Then, a detailed analysis of placemaking case studies from Europe and China is presented in terms of similarities and differences in creating this process. European countries, mainly focus on oral traditions and traditions in intangible cultural heritage. In China, however, less emphasis is placed on the category of history, myths, and legends in the placemaking process. Instead, more use is made of ICH in the categories of nature and universal knowledge. European examples indicate a broader use of intangible forms of placemaking, while in China, tangible effects (attractions) of placemaking, measurable tourism development, and economic

effects are preferred. In China, more actions than in Europe are based on government initiatives. In Europe, UNESCO and non-governmental institutions play a more significant role.

I consider the article "Identifying European and Chinese styles of creating tourist destinations with intangible cultural heritage: A comparative perspective" to be a significant scientific publication. The text was published in a highly ranked and respected journal with a high impact factor. The article represents an interesting and innovative study significant from both scientific and practical perspectives. The added value lies particularly in demonstrating differences and similarities in the process of placemaking based on ICH in tourism in different geographical and cultural areas of Europe and China. Furthermore, the article presents frameworks of placemaking processes categorizing them based on different criteria.

The third article characterized in the reviewed dissertation is entitled "Identifying the role of intangible cultural heritage in distinguishing cities: A social media study of heritage, place, and sense in Guangzhou, China." It is authored solely by Qihang Qiu and was published in 2023 in the *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, an Elsevier publication with a high impact factor. The article addresses the research question of whether ICH has the capacity to render a place distinct, and if so, how.

The article is based on research analyzing online reviews posted by domestic and international tourists on Tripadvisor platform regarding their visits to Guangzhou, a city in China renowned for its long history and rich heritage. The author emphasizes that many contemporary cities lack a sense of place and identity, characterized by placelessness. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is proposed as a potential solution to these identity crises, as it embodies the cultural soul of a place and can enhance tourist experiences.

The research methodology involved identifying and gathering a substantial number of Chinese and English tourist reviews related to travel to Guangzhou from 2004 to 2021. A total of 6,971 Chinese reviews covering 306 places and 12,210 English reviews covering 267 places were analyzed. The reviews were categorized, and a semantic analysis of their content was conducted to determine whether they mentioned ICH and how ICH contributed to distinguishing places and senses of place.

The article incorporates theoretical references to place making theory and destination image theory. Place making theory is defined in multiple contexts: firstly, as place-making, which refers to how people perceive, define, and create places through unplanned, organic actions; and secondly, as placemaking, which involves planned, institutional actions by authorities and institutions to create places. The concept of tourist place making encompasses material, immaterial, and mixed aspects of outcomes. Again, the publication "Tourism Planning and Place Making: Place-making or Placemaking" by A.A. Lew (2017), published in *Tourism Geographies*, is cited in defining these concepts.

The analysis of place making is intertwined with tourist perception (destination image theory). The author argues that contemporary place making can alter subjective destination images, and thus, ICH becomes a powerful tool of shaping destination images. Tourists increasingly share their impressions on platforms like Tripadvisor, effectively using these platforms as tools for promotion and destination image creation. Furthermore, the article underscores that while ICH can positively influence tourist destination images, it can also evoke negative associations. Therefore, planning placemaking activities using ICH must be approached with caution.

The research findings highlight a connection between the perception of various elements of ICH and the overall perception of the city. As a result, placemaking with ICH influences individual sites and enhances tourists' overall sense of Guangzhou. Visiting an ICH-related place or simply recognizing ICH in a place evokes a more positive and distinctive destination image of the entire city. Particularly impactful places include those associated with social practices, rituals, and festive events. The study also demonstrates the value of social network

analysis in examining the role of ICH as a planning tool in distinguishing cities based on online social media reviews.

In conclusion, the article "Identifying the role of intangible cultural heritage in distinguishing cities: A social media study of heritage, place, and sense in Guangzhou, China" contributes significant insights into how ICH can effectively differentiate cities and enhance their destination image, based on robust analysis of online tourist reviews and theoretical frameworks in placemaking and destination image theory.

The fourth article characterized in the Self-report is entitled "Intangible cultural heritage label in destination marketing toolkits: Does it work and how?" It is authored by Qihang Qiu and Yifan Zuo, with Qihang Qiu declaring an 80% contribution to the publication. The article was published in 2023 in the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, an Elsevier journal with an impact factor.

The primary research question addressed in the article is how the labeling of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) contributes to destination marketing. The aim of the study was to empirically explore and confirm the function of ICH labels, revealing how they influence the behavioral intentions of tourists and how they promote marketing approaches and ICH management methods.

The article employs an empirical approach based on a questionnaire survey, utilizing quantitative methods such as statistical analysis and hypothesis testing with software designed for statistical data analysis.

The authors highlight that China is particularly proactive in introducing and commercializing ICH in tourism and urban place making compared to other countries. The concept of intangible cultural heritage is introduced, including its categories according to UNESCO and those established by the Chinese government. The article also discusses the implementation of ICH labels, which encompass slogans, posters, boards, plaques, advertisements, and other visible items designed to remind visitors of specific ICH products and destinations. A significant research gap identified by the authors is that previous research on ICH tourism primarily focused on visitor reactions to products and destinations, neglecting studies on marketing strategies based on ICH labeling.

The theoretical framework applied includes the stimulus-organism-response theory, which explores how the labeling of ICH sites affects behavioral intentions. Hypotheses derived from this theory were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on empirical data collected through a questionnaire survey involving 471 respondents.

As a case study, Yongqingfang, a heritage area in Guangzhou, China, was selected. The results of the study confirm that the cognition of the ICH label positively influences behavioral intentions among tourists. Emotions evoked by the ICH label and the perceived destination image are identified as crucial factors affecting behavioral intentions. The cognition of the ICH label acts as a stimulus, triggering emotions and shaping tourists' perceptions and imaginations of the destination, thereby influencing their intentions to visit ICH sites.

In conclusion, the article "Intangible cultural heritage label in destination marketing toolkits: Does it work and how?" contributes empirical insights into how ICH labeling can effectively enhance destination marketing strategies. It validates the role of ICH labels in influencing tourist behavior and provides a structured understanding of how these labels function in practice, using Yongqingfang as a compelling case study to illustrate their impact on place making.

The next part of Self-report (2.5. Discussion), includes a discussion of the results of the study in relation to the aims and research questions specified at the beginning of the introduction. In my opinion, the discussion lacks references to other scholarly works in the field of place making and ICH; the doctoral candidate focused solely on referring to the objectives and results obtained in the four individual publications.

The following section of Self-report (2.6. Summary and Conclusions) is the final part of the Self-report. It presents the concluding remarks. Following this section, there is a Bibliography, Summary, and keywords in Polish and English. The dissertation also includes annexes containing copies of four published scientific articles included in the publication cycle. Author statements were also attached to confirm the contribution of co-authors to the creation of multi-authored articles.

Bibliometric evaluation of articles constituting a scientific achievement

The cycle of four articles indicated by the doctoral candidate Qihang Qiu, as an achievement for the degree form a coherent and interlinked research project entitled "The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Place Making." The first article (according to the attached list) is a literature review on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in tourism. It is based on the analysis of publications in the form of scientific articles and conference proceedings indexed in WOS databases. It achieves the research goal of understanding the value of ICH, popular ICH resources, and responds to the research question of which ICH resources have been discussed in the literature and what trends and future directions prevail in ICH tourism. The second article addresses the issue of place making associated with ICH resources, presenting a content analysis of scientific literature. The article discusses tourism place making procedures in this context based on examples from Europe and China. The first two articles are examples of theoretical-review studies based on literature studies.

The third article (according to the attached list) takes a different approach, as it is an empirical study based on the analysis of tourists' reviews posted online. The article answers the question of whether ICH has the potential to render a place distinct and how. The fourth article also has an empirical character, based on statistical analysis of questionnaire survey results. It answers the question of how the labeling of ICH contributes to destination marketing.

In summary, in my opinion the presented cycle of 4 scientific articles is coherent, thematically related, and represents a significant scientific achievement in solving an original scientific problem regarding the use of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in tourism place making. The author has demonstrated research maturity in constructing research objectives and questions, conducting research, and drawing conclusions.

Three articles submitted for evaluation are co-authored, one is a doctoral candidate's standalone publication. It should be emphasized that in co-authored publications, the doctoral candidate had a leading role, as demonstrated in the Self-report of the doctoral dissertation, and confirmed by appropriate attachments (Authorship Statements). The journals in which the articles were published have high bibliometric ratings. The journal *Land* has 70 ministerial points and an Impact Factor (IF) of 3.905 (2022). The *International Journal of Tourism Research* has a ministerial score of 100 points and an IF of 4.6 (2022). The *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* has a ministerial score of 140 points, with an IF of 8.4 (2022). Meanwhile, the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* has a ministerial score of 100 points and an IF of 8.3 (2022). The journals are of a very high rank and can be considered significant in the field of socio-economic geography and spatial management. The journals have a very good international reach.

Conclusion

After reviewing the doctoral dissertation submitted by Qihang Qiu MSc, entitled "The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Place Making," I conclude that it constitutes an original solution of a research problem and a valuable contribution to the advancement of the discipline of socio-economic geography and spatial management. The dissertation

demonstrates the author's high theoretical knowledge in the field of socio-economic geography and spatial management. Qihang Qiu presented a comprehensive review of scientific concepts related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and convincingly illustrated the connections between ICH and geography. She adeptly introduced the concept of place making as a research concept in human geography.

Furthermore, Qihang Qiu's doctoral dissertation highlights her full ability to independently conduct scientific research. She presented maturity in formulating the research problem, research objectives, and questions, as well as demonstrated skills in executing these in the course of her research. The reviewed doctoral work consists of Self-report and four coherent and thematically related articles developed using various qualitative and quantitative research methods, including literature reviews, meta-analysis, content analysis based on Tripadvisor reviews, and questionnaire surveys. The selection and effective application of diverse methods serve as further evidence of the author's high level of knowledge and research maturity. It is noteworthy that all publications appeared in highly ranked journals of established reputation with a significant international reach.

My critical comments address the overly simplistic presentation in the Self-report on issues concerning the concept of heritage in general, as well as the lack of broader analysis of types of heritage. Against this background, the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) should be discussed. I also anticipated an exploration in this section regarding how interpretation influences the choice of particular types of heritage used to shape places for tourism. The topics of heritage interpretation and the decision-making process behind selecting heritage elements for place-making are prominent areas of study in heritage analysis, also within the field of human geography.

My second critical remark pertains to the explanation of the concept of place, including the lack of its discussion in relation to the concept of space in geography. In the doctoral dissertation, I find that the theory of place is presented too generally.

The dissertation should also explore the similarities and differences between the related (though distinct) concepts of place branding and place making. Even if these issues were not addressed in individual articles, they could have been clarified and expanded upon in the Self-report.

In conclusion, despite these critical comments, I rate the reviewed dissertation very high in terms of its content. I find that the doctoral dissertation presented in the form of a collection of scientific articles, supplemented and integrated with substantive Self-report, represents an original solution to an important scientific problem, confirming the author's ability to define scientific problems and conduct independent scientific research. I believe that the dissertation meets all the requirements set for candidates for the doctoral degree, as presented in Article 187 of the Act of 20 July 2018, Law on Higher Education and Science (Artykuł 187, Ustawy z dnia 20 lipca 2018 r. - Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce z późniejszymi zmianami). Therefore, I recommend admitting Qihang Qiu to the further stages of the procedure for obtaining the doctoral degree in the discipline of socio-economic geography and spatial management.

Prepared by:

