A Systematic Review of Literature on Contested Heritage

Abstract
Contested heritage has increasingly been studied by scholars over the last two decades in multiple disciplines, however, there is still limited knowledge about what contested heritage is and how it is realized in society. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to produce a systematic literature review on this topic to provide a holistic understanding of contested heritage, and delineate its current state, trends and gaps. Methodologically, four electronic databases were searched, and 102 journal articles published before 2020 were extracted. A content analysis of each article was then conducted to identify key themes and variables for classification. Findings show that while its research often lacks theoretical underpinnings, contested heritage is marked by its diversity and complexity as it becomes a global issue for both tourism and urbanization. By presenting a holistic understanding of contested heritage, this review offers an extensive investigation of the topic area to help move literature pertaining contested heritage forward.

Keywords: contested heritage, diversity, complexity, tourism, urbanization
1. Introduction

The concept of heritage, both as tangible materials and intangible cultural practices, has continued to evolve as a result of people’s shifting ideologies pertaining heritage. Its definition has evolved within a social, political and cultural context (Graham, 2002), to be known today as a cultural process in which meaning is continuously created, recreated and validated for the present (Macdonald, 2013; Smith 2006), and as a consumable experience created to serve many contemporary uses (Ashworth, 2014). The evolution of this concept is reflected in the shifting focus of heritage literature along three interrelated axes: from monuments to people, from objects to their functions, and from preservation to sustainable use and development (Harrison, 2013; Loulanski, 2006). The shift in focus from monuments to people is reflected in the growing literature discussing stakeholder involvement and community engagement in heritage management (e.g. Chinyele & Lwoga, 2018; Thomas & Banks, 2019). The second trend discusses the use of heritage to achieve various modern utility purposes as in the work of Galbo (2019) or Timothy (2018) for instance. The third focus shifts emphasis from heritage preservation to the reconciliation of preservation and the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development (e.g. Avni & Teschner, 2019; Hosagrahar et al., 2016).

Given its wide range of stakeholders, different uses, and need to balance preservation and change, it is unsurprising that heritage has become an arena of contestation. The most representative work that conceptualizes this facet of heritage is Tunbridge and Ashworth’s *Dissonant Heritage* (1996). In their work, dissonance, i.e. discordance and lack of agreement, is deemed intrinsic to the nature of heritage. As ‘all the heritage is someone’s heritage and then logically not someone else’s’ (p. 21), conflict inevitably presents itself in every heritage through aspects of ownership, interpretation and its multiple uses (Ingerpuu, 2018). Later, the contentious nature of heritage was addressed by Olsen and Timothy (2002) using the concept of ‘contested heritage’, which outlined two types of contestation. One type involved different
social groups claiming the ownership of the same heritage but with different interpretations. The other type of contestation occurred when heritage was interpreted and used differently by various divisions within one group. The contestation of heritage was also addressed by Smith (2006) who explored the various ways in which authorized notions of heritage, and the values they represent, are contested. In the last twenty years, the concept of ‘contested heritage’, which may not always be named as such, has been a growing interest of scholars in various fields (e.g. Ristic & Frank, 2019; Schramm, 2016). With increasing numbers of stakeholders from different sectors trying to manipulate heritage to fulfil multiple functions, it is not surprising that heritage is often contested. This contestation provides an unusual opportunity to examine cultural change through the perspectives and behaviours of the various stakeholders. The growing dissonance also prompts a deeper reflection on what heritage is and how it should be used, as it accentuates the contestation between continuity and change in heritage management.

Heritage, with all its dissonance, can still be successfully managed provided a comprehensive understanding of dissonance can be achieved. This study systematically investigates and synthesizes the extant literature concerning contested heritage, with the goal of obtaining a holistic understanding of the field. This review aims to answer the following three questions: 1) What characterizes contested heritage? 2) What are the factors that lead to heritage contestation? 3) What are the challenges and strategies in dealing with contested heritage? By looking at the evolving debate over more than two decades, this study places an emphasis on identifying, characterizing and summarizing the current understanding of contested heritage. It also tries to identify the major gaps in the extant literature to shed light on the potential directions for future studies.

Heritage contestation is not specific to any country, but rather a common phenomenon in pluralistic societies which allows us to understand the complexities and change of reality (Kisić, 2013). In times when heritage contestation is becoming increasingly salient in academic
research, a greater understanding of this topic not only provides timely knowledge to deal with this urgent issue, but also pleads for more pluralist, dynamic and critical explorations of heritage to enable reconciliation and harmony amongst diverse people, cultures and values. The issue of contested heritage creates a space for mutual understanding, participative dialogue and cooperation. Furthermore, it offers valuable insight into heritage governance and policy-making at present, and highlights how it could contribute to peace-building in the future.

2. Methodology

A systematic quantitative literature review allows researchers to analyse existing academic literature in one specific field to produce a structured quantitative summary of the field (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). This method has the advantage of providing a reproducible, reliable assessment of the current status of a research field in a way that ameliorates potential biases which occur in some traditional narrative style reviews (Collins & Fauser, 2005). By using systematic methods to search and categorize the heterogeneous collection of literature, a comprehensive overview of the research field can be produced to help identify the gaps in the existing literature.

This study conducted a systematic literature review to map the landscape of current research concerning contested heritage. The final literature search was conducted in early January 2020, and all the articles published before 2020 were included in the research to present an up-to-date review. Original research papers, published in journals written in English, were obtained from searches on four electronic databases: Scopus, ProQuest Central, Science Direct, and Web of Science. Keywords used for the searches were (‘contest*’ OR ‘contention*’ OR ‘dissonan*’ OR ‘conflict*’ OR ‘contradict*’) AND (‘heritage’), and articles with the search terms in the title, abstract and/or keywords were considered. It is important to note that these keywords were often used interchangeably within the relevant literature. Moreover, a limitation
of the research is its exclusive use of online articles. However, as an increasing number of journals printed originally as a hard copy are also now available online, it is assumed that this bias will not significantly impact the results.

To ensure the quality of the research, only peer-reviewed articles were included. Aware that research pertaining contested heritage is conducted across diverse disciplines, limiting the research to peer reviewed articles only, also worked to ensure each selected paper has already been evaluated within its discipline, recognized as a suitable standard for publication within the academic literature (Guitart et al., 2012). The options available on the utilized databases of Scopus, Science Direct, and Web of Science that help limit and focus the research within social science discipline were also used as additional filters. The collated papers were then assessed based on their abstracts, and full texts when necessary.

[ Fig. 1 ]

Fig. 1 demonstrates the number of studies screened and excluded at different stages of the review. The literature search on the four databases resulted in 1769 records. After removing 263 duplicate references, the remaining 1506 records were screened against the literature selection criteria, where publications such as book reviews, commentaries, editorial notes and research note were eliminated. Despite the exclusion of these publications from results analysis, some of them were reviewed in the screening process as they were found to be helpful in developing greater understanding of the field. Articles from journals like *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy, Energy Research and Social Science* were removed due to a lack of focus on heritage. Further selection criteria included the exclusion of studies in which the main research subject was not heritage, and studies in which heritage was not contested. For instance, some publications regarding the sustainable development of heritage tend to investigate heritage protection techniques rather
than heritage *per se* (e.g. Karoglou et al., 2019). There are also many research papers which use ‘conflict(s)’ as a key word, but do not investigate heritage with reference to any conflict(s) because these studies focus on exploring the threats to heritage posed by violence or attack (e.g. Al Quntar & Daniels, 2016; Brosché et al., 2017).

The screening process found 121 applicable papers, which were then retrieved for further review. The full text of these articles was used to determine if the research would be eligible for the final analysis. Articles that only included the searched terms in its context or findings and did not have a relative coverage in the investigation or discussion were discarded. For example, in Zhang and Smith’s (2019) study, which discusses interrelations among stakeholders in heritage tourism, other than the inclusion of dissonance in the title, there was only one sentence that related to heritage dissonance in its discussion. This stated that ‘there would seem to be a conflicting sense of heritage between that experienced within Xidi and Hongcun and that imposed by World Heritage policies and practice.’ (p. 221) which did not seem to derive from the research itself. Thus, this paper, and others like it, were excluded from the review as they did not explicitly investigate heritage contestation.

Consequently, only 97 articles were identified as eligible for this study. As a supplement to electronic searching, the references of these applicable papers were then explored to source additional relevant studies. The cited references which were deemed relevant were imported into EndNote, and duplicates were removed and cross-referenced amongst the 97 eligible studies. The remaining papers were further screened, and five additional articles were found to be eligible for this study, increasing the total number of articles included in the final analysis to 102.

For the analysis of the literature, first, a summary of the basic information of each paper was entered into an Excel spreadsheet to create a table. This information included the authors,
journal name, journal discipline (based on the main scope displayed on the journal website; for journals with overlapping research fields, the disciplinary affiliation of the first author was referred), year of publication, the location of contested heritage, and the types of heritage discussed. Then, these studies were assessed based on the focus of the research. The points of consideration used to evaluate the texts included: the definition of contested heritage, the factors that caused the contestation, the status of heritage when contestation occurred, the stakeholders involved, and the features of contested heritage. This information was subsequently extracted from each article and recorded in the summary table. A content analysis of this summary table was then conducted and the information within each category was coded, aggregated and abstracted into themes. The construction of these themes, and how they would be explored and quantified, was heavily discussed amongst the research team to enhance the reliability of the analysis and the relevance of the gaps identified within the study.

3. Results

3.1 Overview of Studies Regarding Contested Heritage

The 102 articles used in this study were retained from 58 journals and published before 2020. The dominant disciplines that emerged were heritage (30 articles from three journals), tourism (30 articles in 16 journals), urban and regional studies (15 articles in 13 journals), and archaeology (11 articles over 10 journals). Other disciplines such as politics, geography, anthropology, architecture, and history, were also presented with every journal within these disciplines differing from one another (Fig. 2). In terms of the development of this topic over time, results (Fig. 3) show that overall there was little interest in the topic prior to 2000, with only one article published in that year and seven published within the five years preceding 2000. The number of articles doubled in the following five years. The next five years from 2006 to 2010 witnessed a general increase in the number of papers (17). The growing interest continued
in the subsequent five years (20 articles), and has now reached a peak in the last five years (43 articles were published). The increasing engagement with the topic can be attributed to the growing manipulation of heritage as cultural, economic, social or political resources (Ashworth, 2014). The use of heritage as a means to assert, defend, or deny claims to power, land, legitimacy and so forth could also account for its increasing contestation (Silverman, 2011).

The findings confirm a consistent interest from scholars over time and prove the interdisciplinary relevance of the concept, providing scholars from various fields, that wish to bring a more comprehensive and holistic view of the topic, a foundation of research to utilize in future collaboration and investigation.

[Fig. 2 and Fig. 3]

The geographic distribution of the locations studied in the research show that the issue of contested heritage is of interest in 41 countries, particularly within Asia and Europe (Fig. 4). Contested heritage in China attracted the most attention as it was examined in 16 out of 102 papers. The UK was studied in 11 articles, the USA was investigated in nine studies, while Italy appeared in five papers. Poland, Australia and Romania were presented in more than two articles. The prevalence of study in Europe could be explained by its dissonant history marked by the stigma of two world wars, genocide, colonialism and communism (Owsianowska, 2017). For Asia, its rapid economic growth, especially within its booming tourism industry, enables contested heritage to be foregrounded in literature (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). The widespread geographical distribution of contested heritage indicates the international relevance of this study. However, the diverse context in which contestation occurs also alludes to the issue varying from case to case. Thus, it is important to understand both generalization and specialization when dealing with contested heritage.

[Fig. 4]
The type of contested heritage examined in the reviewed literature ranged widely from significant monuments listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, to prosaic sites known by few people. Within the reviewed articles, 97 papers studied cultural heritage, and of this, 93 explored tangible heritage (Fig. 5). Only five articles discussed natural heritage, three of them examined national parks (Kryder-Reid et al., 2018; Pocock & Lilley, 2017; Weisse & Ross, 2017) and two investigated urban water fronts (Avni & Teschner, 2019; Worden, 1996). There were five articles (Robertson, 2018; Rodenberg & Wagenaar, 2016; Wu, 2019; Yamasaki, 2010; Zhu, 2015) that focused on intangible cultural heritage, and one of which studied both tangible and intangible heritage (three explored rituals and events, one concerned heritage language, and another focused on traditional art). Furthermore, in the 93 articles that examined tangible cultural heritage, 89 papers discussed built heritage, the other four discussed antiques, mummies, documents and frescoes (Kouri, 2017; Nakano, 2018; Plets et al., 2013; Tucker & Carnegie, 2014). The review also highlighted that in 81 of the articles pertaining contested heritage, urban built heritage was of particular focus. Just eight papers investigated built heritage in rural areas. Additionally, more than half of the contested urban heritage sites discussed in the studies were associated with tragic events and portrayed a negative sentiment to some extent. These heritage sites were concerned with colonization (15 papers), war (14 papers), totalitarianism (eight papers), religious divide (seven papers), atrocity and death (four papers), and slavery (three papers). Other contested sites included historic neighbourhoods (eight papers), ethnic heritage (four papers), museums (three papers), archaeological sites (two papers), industrial heritage (two papers), and urban heritage in general (11 papers). The dominant focus on urban built heritage seems to reflect the threat posed to heritage during urban development. Meanwhile, the dark history attached to a heritage enables more contestation as the risks of removing its contentious historic contexts are higher (Roushanzamir
& Kreshel, 2001). Consequently, attention should be given to heritage in sites of urban development with consideration for its sensitive conservation.

[Fig. 5]

Regarding the research method, nearly all the reviewed literature used qualitative data, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, with only two studies purely using quantitative data. Research data was collected using a wide range of social science methods: case studies, fieldwork, text analysis, interviews and surveys (Fig. 6). There were 79 papers using the case study method and among them 61 adopted the single-case design. Studies using a multiple-case design included the comparison of two cases (nine articles), three cases (three articles), and more than three cases (eight articles). The number of multiple-case papers that studied cases from the same country was twice as high as those comparing cases in different countries. The major adoption of single-case design and less comparison of cases across different countries among the reviewed papers highlight the diversity of contested heritage and alludes to the difficulty of its transferability, which requires its management to be fully known. Interviews and fieldwork, including site visits, direct observation and informal interviews, were used in 50 and 35 papers respectively. There were 29 articles utilizing text analysis and texts were obtained from official documents, promotional materials, archives, press reports and websites. Only ten papers used surveys, souring data from questionnaires and guestbooks. The evident preference for qualitative methods in contested heritage studies is likely to be explained by the capabilities of qualitative analysis which enables a deeper understanding of the dissonance to be explored. This alludes to the complexity of heritage contestation.

[Fig. 6]

In regard to the definition of contested heritage, there is a tendency for authors to write about contested heritage, whilst rarely defining the concept. Among the 102 reviewed articles,
only 14 papers presented a definition of the concept despite 17 articles readily using the term ‘contested heritage’ and 10 studies using ‘dissonant heritage’ in their titles. Although ‘contested heritage’ and ‘dissonant heritage’ were interchangeably used by many studies, a subtle difference between the two terms was found. Studies using ‘dissonant heritage’ were more likely to focus on negative and unwanted heritage, therefore, the term was frequently used in studies with post-war, post-colonial and post-catastrophe contexts (e.g. Ashworth, 2002; Battilani et al., 2018; Pavličić, 2016). Articles that preferred using the term ‘contested heritage’ also covered these contexts, but the investigated heritage tended to be more neutral and broader, thus, historic neighbourhoods, traditional rituals, religious sites and antiques were all included in these studies (e.g. Cheung, 1999; Harrison, 2004; Kouri, 2017; Wu, 2019).

[Table 1]  

Table 1 shows the definitions presented by the 14 papers. There was just one article that stated the definition of ‘contested heritage’ (Corsale & Krakover, 2018). The other 13 papers defined the term ‘dissonant heritage’, but only two of them presented their own definitions (Bruce & Creighton, 2006; Lemelin et al. 2013), one of which was also quoted by another study. The remaining 10 papers all cited the pioneering work of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) in which the concept was deeply and comprehensively investigated. Despite the citation of the same work when defining ‘dissonant heritage’, the focus deriving from the definition in the 10 papers varied from disagreement between people to the inconsistency in the past and present meanings of heritage. Thus, there is no unanimous definition.

Despite its varied definitions, there is some indication as to what constitutes contested heritage. Firstly, the contestation of heritage is related to its stakeholders. It is the disagreement between or within stakeholder groups that results in the tensions and conflicts of heritage (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Secondly, every step of heritagization may lead to its
contestation: from heritage creation, interpretation, and presentation to its ownership, marketing and tourism (Ingerpuu, 2018). Finally, the contestation of heritage stems from the change of time. Since heritage is created, shaped and managed in response to the demands and values of a certain period (Graham & Howard, 2008), there could be discordance between past and present heritage. Understanding these key elements allows for effectiveness in contested heritage management.

In order to gain a better understanding of contested heritage, this paper discusses the main elements further, based on the following themes: 1) contestation in different heritage development processes; 2) stakeholders of contested heritage; 3) features of contested heritage; and 4) theories concerning contested heritage.

3.2 Contestation in Different Heritage Development Processes

3.2.1 Contestation in Different Tourism Stages

The literature review demonstrates that contestation can occur at different stages of heritage development. Because the role of heritage is at the heart of cultural tourism (Nuryanti, 1996), most scholars discussed contestation within the context of heritage’s tourism development (56 articles). Therefore, R.W. Butler’s (1980) concept of Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) was used as a reference to understand the contestation in different tourism development stages. Butler’s concept ties in with the economics theory of the product life cycle and is widely used to study different types of tourism attractions and products. Since heritage is often treated as a commodity in contemporary society for economic uses, especially as tourism sites (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000), the TALC model was deemed relevant for this analysis. Due to the difficulty in identifying the specific tourism stage in which contested heritage forms, based on the reviewed papers and the six phases of the TALC model, a simplified version of the original model (Johnston, 2001) with three eras, namely pre-tourism era, tourism era and post-tourism
era was applied (Fig. 7). According to Johnston (2001), the pre-tourism era is theorized to surpass the exploration phase, extending through into the involvement phase with the domination of an unchanged institution; a tourism era will carry on through the maturity epoch and may even include a post-stagnation phase; and a post-tourism period starts when a new institution begins to dominate at the locale.

[Fig. 7]

There were 14 papers investigating contested heritage in the pre-tourism era. Due to the different perceptions of heritage values, contestation mainly occurred in the process to transform heritage resources into tourism products. During the process, whether the heritage resource should be exploited as a tourism product (Battilani et al., 2018; Ivanova, 2017) and how to develop the heritage resource (Su, 2011; Van Dyke, 2017) had given rise to dissonance among stakeholders. Marginalization of the views from local community were also present in this stage (Oakes, 2013).

The contestation of heritage during the tourism era was highlighted in 58 articles. A dominant contestation in this phase stemmed from the interpretation of heritage. This interpretation was contentious in three aspects. The first concerned the authenticity of interpretation. Heritage interpretation is usually focused on the promotion of heritage, meaning that sometimes the ‘real’ history is discarded or even distorted, and the interpretation subsequently becomes accused of losing its authenticity (Chen & Mele, 2017; Gough, 2007; Maior-Barron, 2019). The second contentious aspect of heritage pertained the selectivity of its interpretation. The interpretation of heritage can sometimes erase partial or all undesirable pasts for purposes such as national identity building, and ‘forgetting’ unwanted memories and histories (Best & Phulgence, 2013; Light, 2000). In addition, the focus on interpreting solely universal values of heritage, that ignore the values perceived by local community, has also led
to contestation (Al Rabady, 2013; Tucker & Carnegie, 2014). The third aspect of the contestation centred around the contradiction of interpretations. Due to the competing claims of heritage ownership among different social groups, especially religious groups, each group tries to present the interpretation from its own perspective (Corsale & Krakover, 2018; Olsen & Timothy, 2002). Another contention in this stage stemmed from the different views on the heritage product being protected and promoted. Heritage producers are inclined to focus on what might attract international tourists which can often contradict the interests of the local people (Hellman, 2017; Thompson, 2004).

There was only one article that researched contested heritage in the post-tourism era. It denoted that heritage was contested due to the disinheritance of contributions made by the forced workers and labourers during Nazi’s occupation of British Channel Islands (Carr, 2010).

3.2.2 Contestation in Different Management Status

Another finding of this literature review reflects the importance of status in heritage. There are five main statuses in which a heritage can be stamped with: preserved; restored; reconstructed; regenerated; and demolished (Fig. 8). The preservation of heritage refers to ‘maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration’ (Burra Charter, Article 1.6). The restoration of heritage means ‘returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material’ (Burra Charter, Article 1.7). Reconstruction of heritage looks at ‘returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric’ (Burra Charter, Article 1.8). Heritage-led regeneration refers to ‘initiatives where the driver for the social, economic and cultural revival of a declined urban or rural area is the heritage that makes a local place distinct’ (Fouseki & Nicolau, 2018).
Although regeneration may entail all previously mentioned statues, it is listed separately due to its high relevance in tourism.

[Fig. 8]

Preservation, as a heritage status, appeared in 63 articles out of 102. There were five main factors, established from the review, that lead to contestation. The first was the divergent values and meanings of heritage perceived by stakeholders (Graham, 1996; Muzaini, 2017). Due to these differing perception, questions surrounding whether the heritage should be preserved (Johnson, 2014; While, 2007), what value should be promoted in its preservation (Gadsby & Chidester, 2011; Tucker & Carnegie, 2014), and how to manage the preserved heritage (Hellman, 2017; Nyaupane, 2009) all led to forming a rivalry among various parties. The second factor concerned the competing interests of the stakeholders throughout the heritage process (Cheung, 1999; Suntikul & Jachna, 2013). For example, Putra and Hitchcock (2005) examined the conflicting interests over Besakih’s World Heritage nomination and found that governments wanted to turn the temple into a national monument to attract tourists, while religious bodies and intellectuals feared that the religious significance of the site would be compromised by this. The third factor pertained the marginalization of certain stakeholders (Harrison, 2004), mainly seen in the narrative (Lemelin et al., 2013; Lemelin & Johansen, 2014) and management (Corsale & Krakover, 2018; Hall, 2019) of preserved heritage. The fourth factor was the multiple uses of heritage. Contestation occurred where preserved heritage was used to achieve political (Robertson, 2018), economic (Banaszkiewicz, 2017) and social agendas (Malan, 2004). The last factor that led to contestation in heritage preservation was linked to ownership of heritage (Olsen & Timothy, 2002; Wu, 2019).

Contestation in the restoration status was investigated in 13 articles. One of the reasons why heritage was often restored, as reflected in the studies, was the changing perception of its
value (Chen & Mele, 2017). The potential for heritage to promote tourism was also a major factor that contributed to heritage restoration (Zhu, 2018). Disputes over the restored heritage derived from the different values of the stakeholders (Ingerpuu, 2018; Jacob, 2010), and the perceived loss of authenticity as a result of the restoration process (Bruce & Creighton, 2006; Zhang & Wu, 2016).

There were five articles that discussed heritage reconstruction and its controversy. The conflicting interests among stakeholders (Feighery, 2011; Halevi, 2015; Owsianowska, 2017) and the loss of heritage authenticity (Bruce & Creighton, 2006; Su, 2011) resulted in contestation in reconstruction status. It was found that in some cases the interests of decision-makers were more influential on the final outcome than the value of the heritage per se (Halevi, 2015; Su, 2011).

The contention deriving from heritage-led regeneration was examined in 18 articles. Tensions emerged around three aspects. First, what was worth keeping in the regeneration process was under debate among stakeholders that had different understandings of heritage value and thus conflicting interests (Al Rabady, 2013; Logan, 1996). Second, the market-led approach that dominated regeneration projects often ignored the interests and needs of the local community, consequently resulting in conflict (Su, 2011; Zhang & Li, 2016). Finally, in order to adapt to contemporary needs, the re-use and rebranding of heritage, as a catalyst for the regeneration process, was also a source of dissonance (Chen & Mele, 2017; Ingerpuu, 2018).

The conflicts caused by heritage demolition was studied in six articles, all of which explored instances where heritage was demolished to give way to modern urban development (e.g. Dawood et al., 2011; Esposito & Fauveaud, 2019; Wang & Aoki, 2019). Contention existed between governments who intended to demolish heritage and conservationists who strived to protect the heritage (Beaumont, 2009; Leung, 2019; Zhang & Li, 2016).
The various factors that lead to heritage contestation during different heritage development stages demonstrates the complexity of the issue, while also highlighting the limited research that explores how these factors interact with each other both within the same stage and across different stages. For example, how does the perception of heritage value affect the preferences for heritage use? How could the factors that lead to contestation in the pre-tourism stage influence the contestation in the tourism and post-tourism eras? Thus, a more integrated and dynamic perspective on contested heritage is encouraged in future research. In addition, heritage contestation is multi-layered, encompassing both internal and external triggers (Robertson, 2018). While current studies have identified many external factors, be it political, social or economic, the internal factors that impact stakeholder’s disagreement are less clear. A further investigation on the internal factors may help to account for the various kinds of contestation and shed light on how to deal with this complex issue.

3.3 Stakeholders of Contested Heritage

The stakeholders involved in heritage contestation were discussed in 91 articles out of 102. Based on their conflicting interests examined within the studies, these stakeholders were classified into six groups (Fig. 9).

The most frequently mentioned stakeholder was the public sector (63 articles), particularly the government and authorities, which was found to be the only sector that had competing interest with every other stakeholder group (Beaumont, 2009; Ingerpuu, 2018; Kouri, 2017; Light, 2000; Zhu, 2015). As a key stakeholder and decision-maker, the public sector in the reviewed articles encountered dissonance at a transnational, national and local level. For countries with a shared history (as a result of war and colonization), contestation of heritage existed between governments from different countries during the process of heritage
preservation (Beaumont, 2009), nomination (Rico, 2008) and interpretation (Hannam, 2006). In terms of the development of heritage sites, conflicts were also found within the national government (Flynn, 2011; Robertson, 2018) and between national and local government (Henderson, 2001; Zhang & Wu, 2016). Despite the involvement of other public sectors, including the heritage department, tourism department and planning department, contestation among these divisions were not covered in the studies. As for the conflicts with other stakeholder groups, contestation predominantly occurred between the public sector and local community.

The local community, including residents, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and religious groups, is another key stakeholder group that was discussed in 55 articles, which examined its conflicts with the public sector, private sector, visitors and professionals. The dissonance between the local community and public sector was reflected in a bottom-up approach among residents against the hegemonic power to safeguard their own heritage (Cheung, 1999; Hale, 2001; Putra & Hitchcock, 2005). Regarding the dissonance with private sector, local community argued against the interpretation of heritage from tourism operators (Banaszkiewicz, 2017; Jacobs, 2010), and was conflicted with developers in terms of heritage conservation (Gadsby & Chidester, 2011; Wang & Aoki, 2019). Additionally, the different values attached to heritage resulted in the dissonance between the local community, it’s visitors (Kryder-Reid et al., 2018) and professionals (Plets et al., 2013). The most distinctive feature of local community contention was internal discordance, which was present within each community group (Daehnke, 2007; Harrison, 2004; Olsen & Timothy, 2002; Robertson, 2018).

Professionals, or experts and scholars in relevant fields, are a separate stakeholder group that were studied in 23 articles, regarding their conflicts with the public sector, private sector and local community. The expertise of professionals enabled them to contest the decisions made by the public sector in relation to heritage management (Putra & Hitchcock,
2005; Zhu, 2015). Furthermore, professionals and the private sector often had contradicting visions for, and concerns with, developments in heritage (Galbo, 2019; Worden, 1996). In terms of the conflict with local community, professionals usually take the research value of heritage as priority during conservation, which was contested by local community because their interests and needs were neglected (Daehnke, 2007; Plets et al., 2013).

Visitors, which were studied in 21 papers, composed of domestic visitors, international visitors, and diaspora. Diaspora refers to individuals or communities of any national, ethnic or ethno-religious group living outside the physical boundaries of an understood homeland or ancestral territory (Ang, 2011). The dissonance between visitors and the public sector, private sector and local community all revolved around the interpretation of heritage. This dissonance also had some impact on the fate of heritage (Teye & Timothy, 2004).

The private sector, as discussed in 18 papers, included tourism operators, merchants, heritage site staff, developers and landowners. Its dissonance with the public sector, professionals, NGOs and the local community mainly occurred in response to heritage conservation, however, with visitors, contestation arose as a result the interpretations of heritage, as mentioned previously (Park, 2016; Tucker & Carnegie, 2014).

NGOs were discussed the least amongst all the stakeholders explored in the texts, despite their essential role in the management of contested heritage (Kouri, 2017). As an active protector of heritage, its conflicts with the public sector and private sector centred around heritage conservation, as examined in 12 of the articles (Esposito & Fauveaud, 2019; Jones et al., 2017).

Moreover, an unexpected yet noteworthy stakeholder that emerged within the reviewed literature was the media, which was mentioned in 13 articles. Despite not being involved directly in heritage contestation as other stakeholders were, the media played a significant role
in raising people’s awareness of the contestation and providing updates of the latest progress (Zhang & Li, 2016; Zhu, 2015). It also increased the visibility of the public sector’s handling of, and response to, the contested heritage (Beaumont, 2009; Dawson, 2017).

Overall, the many and varied stakeholders confirm the complexity of contested heritage. Additionally, the conflicts between and within stakeholder groups adds further complexity to the issue. Consequently, the significance of stakeholder engagement is stressed in several studies. For example, Nyaupane (2009) addressed a strong need for the various stakeholders to communicate, cooperate and collaborate in order to reduce dissonance amongst the groups. Battilani et al. (2018) argued that sustainable tourism development of dissonant heritage can only be achieved by engaging the local community. Stakeholder engagement is also recognized for its key role in the nomination of UNESCO’s World Heritage sites (Harrison, 2004). Although the importance of getting stakeholders involved is well recognized in contested heritage management literature, how to engage the stakeholders, what the expected outcomes of stakeholder’s engagement are, and whether stakeholder engagement works in different cultural and political contexts, are some of the managerial and theoretical questions that currently remained unsolved.

3.4 Features of Contested Heritage

Despite the various types of contested heritage, four features are deemed intrinsic to contested heritage. The first feature is its multiple stakeholders with conflicting interests. Conflicting interests among these stakeholders make contested heritage a very complex issue as satisfying the interests of one group may compromise the interests of the other. This lack of synergy amongst the different stakeholders’ interests was also found in both the urbanization and tourism development process (Wang, 2008; Zhang & Li, 2016). The discordant interests and objectives within the stakeholder groups makes the issue more complex with various sub-
divisions trying to exert their visions in this discursive space (Olsen & Timothy, 2002). Corsale and Krakover (2018) highlighted that even a small minority group that is apparently united and homogeneous, faces dissonance when dealing with historic legacy. This review shows that dissonance among stakeholders is linked to five main factors, namely heritage ownership (Kouri, 2017; Wu, 2019), the value and meaning of heritage (Gadsby & Chidester, 2011; Shilo & Collins-Kreiner, 2019), the use of heritage (Dawson, 2017; Su, 2011), heritage interpretation (Gough, 2007; Muzaini, 2017) and heritage authenticity (Bruce & Creighton, 2006; Zhang & Wu, 2016).

The wide range of stakeholders involved in the contestation of heritage, in some ways leads to the second feature, which is the intentional or unintentional marginalization of certain stakeholders. Sometimes, it is inevitable that some less important stakeholders are ignored in heritage management (Flynn, 2011). However, despite encouragement from UNESCO to institutionalize community involvement in the management of heritage sites, ‘grassroot stakeholders’, in particular, local residents, are deliberately omitted from the management process by the decision-makers (Kouri, 2017, p. 41). As Yeoh and Kong (1997, p. 53) stated, heritage is ‘a repository of elite or state power’ wherein the dynamic power relations are reflected. Within the context of China, the marginalization of community-level stakeholders is comparatively salient, as a result of its top-down management system. Heritage in China is under a hierarchical and centralized state administration. Therefore, government plays a leading role in the protection, utility and management of heritage (Zhu, 2015). Despite the top-down governmentality and lack of community engagement, residents who are seeking involvement in heritage management in China are beginning to advocate for a shift toward a bottom-up approach (Yan, 2015).

Contested heritage is also dynamic because heritage itself is a product of contemporary times (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Since heritage is used to ‘construct, reconstruct and
negotiate a range of identities, and social and cultural values and meanings in the present’ (Smith, 2006, p. 3), the memory and meaning attached to the heritage may vary from generation to generation, which means contestation over heritage is ever-shifting (Harrison, 2004a). Therefore, balancing the conservation of contested heritage with the inevitability of change as part of this dynamic process, will always be a very complex and challenging task.

The last intrinsic feature of contested heritage is the lack of strategies available to cope with contestation. Few articles presented strategies to address this issue and of those that did, most strategies attempted to address the lack of agreement with specific focus on heritage meaning and interpretation. For example, Nauert (2017) presented a constructive bottom-up approach to integrate diverse narratives. Instead of creating a fixed overall narrative, this approach focused on an inclusive process that involved various stakeholders acting as active interpreters in the construction of their own knowledge. Using technology as a strategy was explored by Lemelin and Johansen (2014) who found that the incorporation of QR code in dissonant heritage sites provided an opportunity to enable interpretative narratives to be communicated to visitors, and thus helping resolve some of the contention over heritage. The emergence of virtual heritage applications was also found to be helpful as they act as ‘neutral and adaptive tools that allow different stories to appear side by side’ (Selim et al., 2017, p. 161). Another strategy commonly mentioned in the literature focused on the involvement of various stakeholders in heritage management (Weisse & Ross, 2017), despite the difficulties of true citizen empowerment in practice (Thomas & Banks, 2019).

The features of contested heritage indicate the key role of stakeholder in its management, and thus it is important for future studies to shift the focus from heritage itself to its stakeholders. Current studies have made it evident that multiple stakeholders with different value perceptions and interests are embedded in contested heritage. Therefore, more research is needed to characterize the stakeholders and better understand their motivations, perspectives
and expectations. Moreover, stakeholder systems are not just a set of isolated actors, they are subjected to continuous interactions. As such, placing more emphasis on the interrelationships between stakeholders and how their relationships influence heritage contestation could greatly benefit the literature to produce a fuller picture of the complexities embedded within contested heritage. It may also provide further information that could help better coordinate the relationships between these stakeholders to mitigate contestation. Additionally, the cultural context within which contestation occurs is also a significant factor to be considered as culture impacts the understanding and management of heritage. For example, Byrne (2011) noticed that in Asia, but particularly in China, culture connotation plays a more important role in heritage conservation than material forms of the heritage site. Differing from the Western heritage practices in which inheritance is constructed through stone material to overcome the erosion of time, the Chinese tend to inhabit inheritance in the intangible part of heritage, such as rituals and folklore (Zhu, 2015). Although it is too simplistic to reduce the tangible-intangible dichotomy in heritage to an East-West division, it is important to acknowledge the significant influence culture has on the knowledge and values to understand contested heritage.

### 3.5 Theoretical Perspective and Contribution

The theoretical perspective of this review captures the extent to which contested heritage research applies theories, conceptual frameworks and models to motivate and guide its investigations. It demonstrates that most articles exploring the topic lack discerning theoretical development, and that those which do explicitly use theoretical perspectives are relatively recent. The theories mentioned the most were Smith’s (2006) authorized heritage discourse (AHD) and Tunbridge and Ashworth’s (1996) heritage dissonance. These two heritage theories offer specific perspectives to examine heritage contestation in terms of power relations, and the dissonant nature of heritage (Maior-Barron, 2019; Pavličić, 2006). Since heritage is a social
process (Harvey, 2001), several sociological theories have been used to analyse contested heritage also. These theories include post-colonial theory (Hannam, 2006), practice theory (Plets et al., 2013), collective memory theory (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015), social movement theory (Jones et al., 2017), identity process theory (Battilani et al., 2018), and international relations theory (Nakano, 2018). In addition, theoretical perspectives from the disciplines of anthropology, management, culture and economics were utilized by the researchers to provide further insights into contested heritage management. Examples include heritage proximity (Nyaupane, 2009), stakeholder collaboration (Suntikul & Jachna, 2013), globalization theory (Pocock & Lilley, 2017), ontological turn (Van Dyke, 2017), and neoliberalism (Galbo, 2019).

The theoretical contribution, which captures the extent to which the reviewed articles add novel and substantive theoretical insights to the extant literature, indicates that most of the reviewed articles borrowed theories from external sources. Several articles employed inductive approaches to advance novel concepts or theoretical frameworks. Graham (2002) introduced a knowledge-based approach for heritage regeneration in cities. Al Rabady (2013) proposed a theoretical framework that enables reconciliation between the official/civic nexus and stimulates creative urban images and identities simultaneously. Shilo and Collins-Kreiner (2019) developed a framework for analysing conflicts in heritage tourism sites. In addition, Hall (2019) advanced a concept of ‘heritage prospecting’ to explain the constant formation, emergence, and expansion of heritage as a politicized and flexible resource (p. 333); and Esposito and Fauveaud (2019) raised the issue of ‘atomization of heritage politics’ (p. 671).

Despite the limited theoretical contribution generated from the reviewed articles, certain theoretical insights were indicated for future research. For example, in Yan’s (2015) study, the knowledge/power nexus was examined to show how knowledge is used as a form of power. Thus, other types of power may need to be further explored to better understand how
they influence heritage contestation. Jones et al. (2017) highlighted the significant role structure and agency analysis can have in the investigation of heritage contestation, utilizing the actor-network approach to analyse the social and material relations of stakeholders. In addition, the work of Thomas and Banks (2019) mentioned several community involvement models which could be further explored to assist stakeholders in better engagement with heritage management decisions.

Although contested heritage research largely lacks theoretical perspectives, recent studies have witnessed a growth in theory-oriented contributions. These studies use a wide spectrum of theoretical perspectives from different disciplines to reveal the multiple layers of this complex issue. The use of external theories does contribute to the research of contested heritage, however, specialized frameworks and models for contested heritage should be developed to complement, consolidate and enhance extant literature to create a stronger knowledge base. Furthermore, despite the significant theoretical insights provided by the current literature, most of them are used to explain heritage contestation. Little progress has been made to offer insights that help to cope with contested heritage. Therefore, research focusing on testing, extending and integrating theoretical modes and frameworks that help manage contested heritage should be explored further in the future.

4. Conclusion

This paper presents a systematic review of contested heritage literature to gain a holistic understanding of this issue. The study covers 102 articles published in 58 journals prior to 2020. The results demonstrate the diversity and complexity of contested heritage. The diversity of the topic is reflected in the various factors that lead to heritage contestation and the different contexts in which contestation occurs. This diversity provides reason for the lack of a consolidated understanding of this topic, and indicates the need for studies to broaden the scope
of their investigation to generalize the issue. Despite the necessity to be aware of the specific contexts in which heritage contestation occurs, focusing solely on this provides little insight into ways to cope with the problem with consideration of its diversity. The multiplicity of stakeholders and their discordance in different heritage development stages demonstrates the complexity of contested heritage. The dynamic nature of heritage adds another layer to its complexity. Therefore, studies should not only focus on stakeholders with a special emphasis on understanding how their positions and relations are shaped by the contested heritage, but also with consideration for the shifting values and needs of stakeholders.

This research also shows that tourism and urbanization are triggers of contested heritage. The booming tourism industry which regards heritage as a core resource has caused a major contestation especially in terms of packaging the past (Baillie et al., 2010). The rapid urban development which involves a level of devastation, ruination, and forced resettlement also poses threat to the longevity and security of heritage (Al-Houdalieh & Sauders, 2009). However, both tourism and urbanism could be valuable conceptual and empirical frames to understand the multiple facets of contested heritage. The contestation over heritage caused by urbanization and tourism suggests the need to reconcile heritage management with urban development and tourism. However, neither the topic of heritage and urbanization, nor the subject of heritage and tourism, is new. The continuous contestation which urbanization and tourism bring to heritage over the two decades should prompt reflection on the significance of the issue and the impact of current research in practice.

By examining theoretical issues, it is found that there is a general lack of theoretically grounded research and theoretical contributions amongst the reviewed literature. This indicates the need to expand the knowledge base of contested heritage. Researchers in recent studies are more prone to apply theories from different fields. These studies bring diversified theoretical perspectives to understand contested heritage and provide a more complex conceptualization
of heritage as contested by capital, memory and identity (Ivanova, 2017; Su, 2010; Van Dyke, 2017). Of concern, however, is the lack of research that elaborates on how to pacify contestation through frameworks that offer solutions, and promote sustainable and harmonious developments in contested heritage. Thus, the managerial practice of contested heritage warrants closer examination in the future.

According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006), a systematic review has its own limitations due to its retrospective, observational, and selective nature. This research is not exempt from limitations. First, only academic journal articles which are available online were examined in this review. Future research including valuable grey literature may offer additional insights into the topic. Second, heritage is not a highly specialized terminology, it is a common expression broadly used across various fields. Therefore, to eliminate irrelevant literature and enhance the precision of the resultant literature, the search was restricted to title, abstract, and keywords in the selection process. Consequently, studies that have considered contested heritage but do not mention the search terms in any of the three sections may have been overlooked. It is recommended that future researchers should be prudent in their studies to achieve a balance between comprehensiveness and precision when conducting their systematic literature review. Finally, key words used as a starting point in this research were different derivatives of the word ‘contested’. Noticing the popularity of the term ‘dissonant’ in the reviewed literature and its slight difference in meaning from ‘contested’ on the spectrum of negativity, a further review with a focus on ‘dissonant’ in the search term is encouraged to compare the findings with this review.

Despite the limitations, this review has demonstrated the multi-faceted nature of contested heritage and developed a foundation for future researchers to collaboratively present a more comprehensive and holistic view of the topic. Based on the findings from the review, the following recommendations are provided for future research. First, since stakeholder
groups are not just a set of isolated actors but subjected to continuous interactions, future research could focus not only on stakeholders *per se* but also on their interrelationship or network. This is crucial for a more nuanced account of heritage contestation and a better understanding of the mechanism of contestation that significantly influence decision-making and policy-makers. Second, despite the growing consensus on the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach when dealing with contested heritage (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013; Pacifico & Vogel, 2012), there is limited knowledge of how decision-makers can approach and engage all stakeholders effectively. For example, to what extent should different stakeholder groups be involved? What are the expected outcomes of stakeholder engagement? The multi-stakeholder approach requires an understanding of not only stakeholder attributes but also the factors that drive or impede their engagement in contested heritage management. Focusing on those factors in the early stage of a contested development may contribute to the change of current frameworks dealing with contested heritage and renew methods for a more positive outcome. Further, heritage contestation is an inevitable part of globalization, which also opens up potential for new types of contestation to develop due to the fact that dominant Western paradigms may not fit into the context of non-Western cultures (Matsuda & Mengoni, 2016). Future research is encouraged to explore cultural pluralism and its translation. The investigation of how heritage is shaped and reshaped by different cultures enables an understanding of the similarities and differences between heritage contestation in a Western and non-Western context to be foregrounded, while also revealing how one society is influenced by transcultural factors.
References


Table 1. Definitions given in the collected articles (Original definition of dissonant heritage was provided on the top of the table)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author (Year)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ashworth (2002)</td>
<td>Dissonant heritage is a condition in which there is a lack of congruence in time or space between people and their heritage (Tunbridge &amp; Ashworth, 1996).</td>
<td>International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Graham (2002)</td>
<td>Tunbridge and Ashworth’s thesis of dissonant heritage (1996) represents the most sustained attempt to conceptualize this facet of heritage and its repercussions. Dissonance is a condition that refers to the discordance or lack of agreement and consistency as to the meaning of heritage.</td>
<td>Urban Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bruce &amp; Creighton (2006)</td>
<td>Town walls can be conceptualized as a ‘dissonant’ form of heritage whose value is contested between different interest groups and whose meanings are not static but can be rewritten.</td>
<td>International Journal of Heritage Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Su (2011)</td>
<td>The notion of dissonant heritage, developed by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), illustrates a concerted effort to conceptualize the contested nature of heritage through a focus on the mismatch and disagreement between different groups of people towards the meaning and use of heritage.</td>
<td>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lemelin et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Dissonant heritage is defined as the perpetuation of grand colonial narratives in Australia, North America and elsewhere which have resulted in the general omission of indigenous narratives from discourse about, and interpretation and development at, many sites associated with battlefield, dark or warfare tourism.</td>
<td>International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Johnson (2014)</td>
<td>The concept of ‘dissonant heritage’, introduced by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), examined the ways in which the past can be used as a resource in present conflict situations.</td>
<td>International Journal of Heritage Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yankholmes &amp; McKercher (2015)</td>
<td>Thus, dissonant heritage sites, places whose value is contested between different interest groups and whose meanings are not static but can be rewritten (Bruce &amp; Creighton, 2006), are especially problematic, for the entire debate about the meaning and resultant use of the site is unresolved.</td>
<td>Journal of Heritage Tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annex 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contestation in different tourism stages</td>
<td>Al Rabady, 2013; Anson, 1999; Ashworth, 2002; Ashworth &amp; Ashworth, 1998; Banaszkiewicz, 2017; Battilani et al., 2018; Beaumont, 2009; Best &amp; Phulgence, 2013; Bofulin, 2017; Buchholtz, 2005; Calum, 2018; Carr, 2010; Chang &amp; Teo, 2009; Chen &amp; Mele, 2017; Cheung, 1999; Corsale &amp; Krakover, 2018; Creighton, 2007; Dawson, 2017; Esposito &amp; Fauveaud, 2019; Feighery, 2011; Förster et al., 2016; Galbo, 2019; Gough, 2007; Graham, 1996; Graham, 2002; Hale, 2001; Hall, 2019; Hannam, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Hellman, 2017; Henderson, 2001; Hökerberg, 2017; Ivanova, 2017; Jacobs,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholders of contested heritage