

EMPOWERMENT IN TOURISM: A REVIEW OF PEER-REVIEWED LITERATURE

YEGANEH AGHAZAMANI AND CARTER A. HUNT

Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management, The Pennsylvania State University,
University Park, PA, USA

This article presents a review of the peer-reviewed scholarship that explores the relationship between tourism and empowerment. The concept of empowerment has attracted much interest from social scientists, and we begin by briefly synthesizing those perspectives. Our query of scholarly databases reveals 53 peer-reviewed articles that focus either conceptually or empirically on the topic of tourism-related empowerment. A thematic analysis of these writings revealed five main areas of focus: (1) issues related to *local residents*, (2) issues related to *gender*, (3) issues related to *employees* of tourism and hospitality firms, (4) issues related to *disempowerment*, and (5) issues related to *tourists*. We emphasize three main summary points about this literature. First, empowerment is typically assessed via single-shot case studies that focus on outcome rather process. Second, subjects of research on empowerment are not limited to local resident “hosts.” Third, although scholars have addressed a related notion of disempowerment, it is not clear whether this exists at the opposite end of a single empowerment continuum or if instead these are two distinct concepts, each occurring along a unique dimension. Finally, we build upon other social sciences and our synthesis of the tourism literature to offer a reconciliatory definition of empowerment as “a multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement with the phenomenon of tourism.” We conclude by suggesting several opportunities for further empirical research on tourism-related empowerment.

Key words: Empowerment; Local residents; Communities; Gender; Tourism

Introduction

Notions of empowerment have long been inherent in scholarly writings on tourism and development (e.g., deKadt, 1979). With the phenomenon of

tourism growing to consist of more than 1 billion tourists crossing international borders, and many more traveling domestically (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2017), there remains a need to assess tourism’s potential

Address correspondence to Yeganeh Aghazamani, Doctoral candidate, Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management, The Pennsylvania State University, 817 Donald H. Ford Building, University Park, PA 16802, USA. Tel: 1-814-441-55231; E-mail: yua124@psu.edu

contributions to the empowerment of local residents across spatial and temporal scales. This article reviews the concept of empowerment in peer-reviewed tourism research. To preface and frame our review, we first appraise other social science perspectives on empowerment. We then present a thematic analysis of empowerment specifically in the context of tourism. This analysis demonstrates wide variation in the ways that empowerment is treated. It also reveals that tourism scholars have yet to develop a widely cited definition, one that encompasses all the ways that empowerment is currently being approached in the tourism literature. As this may hinder unified perspectives on the concept, we offer a comprehensive definition to guide scholarship involving tourism-related empowerment.

Empowerment Across the Social Sciences

Empowerment has been studied through several social science lenses. This section outlines these social science perspectives, many of which have informed the research on tourism-related empowerment. For instance, political scientists tend to assess empowerment in relation to the involvement of minority groups who are disadvantaged in the political decision-making processes, a condition that in turn affects their attitudes towards the government, and their access to government jobs (Banducci, Donovan, & Karp, 2004; Weissberg, 1999). As a result, political scientists have characterized empowerment as the process of developing critical capabilities with respect to analyzing economic, social, and political issues; learning to cope with difficulties; and participating in political debates (de-Shalit, 2004).

Also focusing on the disadvantaged populations, the social welfare perspective views political activities as requisites for taking control of one's life. Social welfare scholars espouse a process-based approach that emphasizes mobilization to attend community groups and to collectively participate in political activities as a means of acquiring power (Friedmann, 1992). This perspective characterizes empowerment as involving increased awareness among the oppressed of the power dynamics that influence them, the elevation of their capacity to gain control over their lives, and their ability to support the empowerment of others (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003). Taking action to confront perceived problems,

and to take ownership of initiatives and programs, are therefore characteristics of empowered individuals (Secret, Jordan, & Ford, 1999).

The same holds true in the field of women's studies. Empowerment for women is a function of having individual agency—that is, one's "power to" make choices and act upon them (Kabeer, 1999; Rowlands, 1997). Echoing the notion of stages of growth (Rostow, 1959), both social welfare and women's studies perspectives suggest a prescriptive process for the disadvantaged (e.g., women, minority groups, the poor, the elderly) that, if followed, would enable them to participate in decision-making, including, but not limited to, decisions in the workplace and in politics (Goodkind & Foster-Fishman, 2002; Kabeer, 2005; Rowlands, 1997).

In the field of education, ideas about empowerment focus on conscientization, or the development of a critical consciousness about social inequalities. Drawing heavily on Freire (1973), ideas about education-related empowerment suggest that conscientized individuals are better positioned to inspire others, to raise their own self-confidence, and to achieve social equality that can lead to liberation of other individuals (Hur, 2006). By comparison, health studies place greater focus on the collective action of groups of individuals as fundamental for the creation of a path towards overcoming health-related issues such as substance abuse and weight reduction (Hur, 2006). These group-level processes raise awareness about the problem or disease, establish a sense of community about shared challenges, foster a critical consciousness about strengths and resources of medical care, and help both individuals and groups exert control over the situation over time through perseverance and persistence in ways that lead to improved quality of life (Gibson, 1995; Peterson & Reid, 2003).

Community psychology is another discipline that addresses the empowerment of individuals within a group. Empowerment here is described as a process of building relationships among individual members in ways that provide opportunities to learn from those different than oneself and that therefore foster a greater sense of community (Rossing & Glowacki-Dudka, 2001). In communities, social support is a critical component of empowerment because it provides members with both tangible (e.g., food) and intangible (e.g., emotional and informational)

forms of encouragement (Ibañez et al., 2003). For community psychologists, raising an individual's capacity to participate in community activities raises the collective interdependence of a community, provides a greater voice for its members, and thus allows them to exert more control over their lives (Goodkind & Foster-Fishman, 2002). This approach to empowerment explicitly incorporates an intrapersonal, individual component (e.g., critical awareness of oneself, self-esteem, self-efficacy), as well as an interactional, social component (e.g., understanding of resources required to reach goals, awareness about the community and its problems) (Banyard & LaPlant, 2002; Zimmerman, 1995).

Lastly, management studies take another approach to the concept of empowerment by examining the relationships between employers and employees. To foster empowerment of employees, managers are encouraged to provide accurate information about

the business, to create a sense of ownership, and to provide the opportunity to participate in decision-making (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001; Crawford, Hubbard, O'Neill, & Guarino, 2009). Reducing the influence of organizational hierarchies, and instead creating self-directed teams that highlight the collective interests of employees, are ways of improving employee well-being.

The work in these disciplines has, in many cases, influenced the ways that tourism scholars approach empowerment. A comparison of each of these social science perspectives on empowerment is presented in Table 1, where we also introduce a new comprehensive definition of empowerment in the context of tourism. As we demonstrate in the review that follows, there are important points of divergence among tourism scholars that create a need for a tourism-specific definition that reconciles divergent understandings of empowerment resulting from tourism.

Table 1
Empowerment as Defined Across the Social Sciences

Discipline	Definition	OC	PR	Source
General	To give official authority or legal power to, or to promote the self-actualization or influence of	x		Merriam-Webster (2017)
Political Science	An approach for development that places emphasis on autonomy in community decision making, local self-reliance, direct democracy and social learning	x		Friedmann (1992)
Women's Studies	The descriptive representation of minority groups in political activities	x		Banducci et al. (2004)
	The processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability		x	Kabeer (1999)
	A process through which women achieve increased control over public decision making		x	Longwe (2002)
Psychology	A process by which individuals, communities, and organizations gain mastery over issues		x	Rappaport (1987)
Education	People in group efforts to identify their problems, to critically assess social and historical roots of problems, to envision a healthier society, and to develop strategies to overcome obstacles in achieving their goals	x		Wallerestien and Brenstein (1988)
	A process of individual and group transformation in which individuals and groups come to develop mastery of their lives and control valued resources and to develop skills in interpersonal influence and participatory competence through group-problem solving and collective action		x	Kreisberg (1992)
Health Studies	A social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities in gaining control over their lives in their community and larger society		x	Wallerestien and Brenstein (1988)
	A social process of recognizing, promoting, and enhancing people's abilities to meet their own needs, solve their own problems, and mobilize the necessary resources in order to feel in control of their own lives		x	Gibson (1995)
Tourism	A multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement with the phenomenon of tourism		x	This article

OC: outcome-oriented definition; PR: process-oriented definition.

Systematic Review Procedures

Consistent with the procedures utilized in other recent systematic reviews (e.g., Ardoin, Wheaton, Bowers, Hunt, & Durham, 2015), this review began with searches of three scholarly databases: *Web of Science*, *PsycInfo*, and *ScienceDirect*. We performed queries with the terms “empowerment” and “tourism” in the title, topic, and research abstract of published articles. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were carried forward for further inspection. These initial searches returned 214 articles, of which 24 duplicates were removed. The remaining 190 unique articles were then thoroughly reviewed by both authors. To keep the focus in this review on peer-reviewed scholarship that is analytically and/or conceptually centered on empowerment in the tourism context, we established an additional criterion of including only those peer-reviewed articles that provide one or more of the following elements: an explicit definition of empowerment, addressing empowerment in the research question, focus on the empowerment concept in the literature review, operationalization of empowerment measures, one or more conceptual models of empowerment, and/or original empirical evidence.

In 142 articles, it was immediately evident that the term empowerment only appeared briefly in an introduction or in the conclusion section. Such articles did not contain any substantive analytical or conceptual focus on empowerment, but rather used the term empowerment sparingly, often as a passing buzzword. The result is just 48 articles met these relatively broad inclusion criteria. Upon internal discussion and comments made by reviewers of this manuscript, we identified an additional six publications that warranted inclusion, making a total of 53 articles that form the basis of the review here. Although this approach necessarily leaves out nonrefereed writings that some may feel are relevant to discussions of empowerment in the tourism context, in terms of providing a basis upon which to develop a comprehensive working definition of tourism-related empowerment proposed later in this article, the content assembled and reviewed here provides an ample overview of the thematic approaches to empowerment in the tourism literature. Descriptive characteristics of these articles are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Peer-Reviewed Articles on Tourism and Empowerment

Characteristics	No.
Research type	
Conceptual	8
Empirical	45
Research design	
Primarily quantitative in nature	16
Primarily qualitative in nature	29
Data collection techniques	
Survey/questionnaire	18
Focus group	5
Semistructured interview/open-ended questions	18
Participant observation	15
Focus group	5
Content analysis	4
Life history	1
Archival data	1
Data analysis	
Factor analysis	8
Regression	3
Structure equation modeling	1
Path analysis	1
Basic descriptive statistics	1
<i>t</i> Test	2
ANOVA	1
Ethnography (autoethnography)	1
Grounded theory	3
Hermeneutics	1
Case studies	4
Content analysis	2

Conceptualizations of Empowerment in Tourism

Here we thematically organize the scholarship on tourism-related empowerment based on the ways the original authors conceptualized the concept. Though the empowering effects of tourism for local destination community residents most often serve as the focus of the articles in this review, as we discovered, this is not the only way the empowerment concept has been addressed in the context of tourism. The empowerment of tourism employees, tourism's influence on gender roles, ways that tourism may lead to the disempowerment of individuals, and ways that tourism empowers tourists themselves are other themes that scholars have examined. Table 3 presents the citations associated with each of these themes.

Theme #1: Local Resident Issues

The majority of the peer-reviewed scholarship on empowerment in tourism contexts (73.6%) focused

Table 3
Thematic Emphasis of Peer-Reviewed Articles on Tourism and Empowerment

Thematic Emphasis	% (n)	Citations
Local resident issues	73.6% (n = 39)	Alsawafi (2016), Annes and Wright (2015), Boley, Ayscue et al. (2017), Boley and Johnson Gaither (2016), Boley and McGehee (2014), Boley et al. (2014), Boley et al. (2015), Chen, Li, and Li (2017), Cole (2006, 2007), Coria and Calfucura (2012), Farrelly (2011), Ferguson (2011), Hall (2013), Han et al. (2014), Jensen (2010), Kirby (2014), Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw, and Chipumuro (2012), Lapeyre (2011), Marcinek and Hunt (2015), Maruyama et al. (2016, 2017), Mazro-Navaro et al. (2016), McMillan et al. (2011), Moswete and Lacy (2015), Nunkoo and Ramkinson (2013), Petrić (2007), Ramos and Prideaux (2014), Ruiz-Ballesteros and Hernández-Ramírez (2010), Scheyvens (1999), Scheyvens and Russel (2012), Sidali, Morrocho, and Garrido-Pérez (2016), Strzelecka (2015), Strzelecka, Boley, and Strzelecka (2017), Strzelecka, Boley, and Woosnam (2017), Sutawa (2012), Tran and Walter (2014), Tucker and Boonabaana (2012), C. C. Wang, Cater, and Low (2016), Weaver (2010), Weng and Peng (2014)
Gender issues	26.4% (n = 14)	Alsawafi (2016), Annes and Wright (2015), Berdychevsky, Gibson, and Bell (2013), Berdychevsky, Gibson, and Poria (2013), Boley et al. (2017), Ferguson (2011), Kirby (2014), Kwaramba et al. (2012), Marcinek and Hunt (2015), McMillan et al. (2011), Moswete and Lacy (2015), Nunkoo and Ramkinson (2013), Tran and Walter (2014), Tucker and Boonabaana (2012)
Employee issues	17.0% (n = 9)	Cheung et al. (2012), Chiang and Hsieh (2012), Crawford et al. (2009), Garg and Dhar (2016), Luoh, Tsaur, and Tang (2014), Moura et al. (2015), Ro and Chen (2011), Scheyvens and Russel (2012), Sharpley and Forster (2003)
Disempowerment issues	11.3% (n = 6)	Hall (2013), Han et al. (2014), Luoh et al. (2014), Ramos and Prideaux (2014), Scheyvens (1999), Weng and Peng (2014)
Tourist issues	9.4% (n = 5)	Berdychevsky, Gibson, and Bell (2013), Berdychevsky, Gibson, and Poria (2013), Doran (2016), Kerr et al. (2009), Y. Wang et al. (2015)

Note. Papers may address more than one theme; total counts may therefore sum to more than 53.

on local residents. Empowerment may result from direct economic benefits that tourism generates for local people (Boley & Johnson Gaither, 2016; Scheyvens, 1999), through employment opportunities (Coria & Calfucura, 2012; Boley & Gither, 2015), by community control of financial benefits, and via access to productive assets by the disadvantaged (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014; Scheyvens, 1999). Empowering forms of access do not pertain just to jobs but also to natural and other financial resources, political influence, and indigenous ownership and management opportunities (Coria & Calfucura, 2012; Strzelecka, 2015). Additional signs of economic empowerment therefore involve equitable distribution of economic benefits and improved access to local facilities, utility systems, and protected areas (Coria & Calfucura, 2012; Scheyvens, 1999). The ability to overcome leakage to retain tourism earnings within the local community (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014) has likewise been

used as an indicator of economic empowerment for local residents.

The most influential conceptualization of empowerment in tourism comes from Scheyvens (1999), whose framework for assessing ecotourism-related empowerment outcomes for local communities incorporates not just economic but also social, cultural, and political dimensions. In this schema, social empowerment is presented as the strengthened sense of cohesion and integrity that communities feel when involved in tourism, often when individuals and families work together to build successful ventures. These social outcomes are thus more likely when tourism revenues are applied to community development needs (e.g., building schools or improving roads).

The political dimension of empowerment refers to the ability of diverse interest groups of communities to have their voices represented in tourism development projects (Scheyvens, 1999). This form of empowerment could result from involvement in

the governance of tourism operations—for example, decisions as to how benefits of tourism are distributed within a community. Participation in decision-making is forged through understanding tourists and accessing information that represents the process of empowerment as a fundamental component of sustainable tourism development (Cole, 2006). Ramos and Prideaux (2014) draw on the political dimension of empowerment, using the term in reference to an individual's access to capacity-building institutions (i.e., forms of collective action) that provide technical skills in support of developing small and medium tourism enterprises. Farrelly (2011) and Petrić (2007) both studied the ways that centralization of decision-making power, inequalities in the distribution of tourism-related benefits, and a dearth of knowledge, capital, and skill for developing tourism enterprises limited tourism-related empowerment.

Other scholars extended this notion of empowerment to account for the ability of individuals to not only participate in decision-making, but also to act in the collective interest of their community (e.g., Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). Scheyvens and Russell (2012) and Zhao and Ritchie (2007) describe empowerment as a tool for poverty alleviation for both individuals and communities, and in both cases these authors emphasized the removal of barriers to the participation of the poor in community decision-making, thus linking both economic and political forms of empowerment. Numerous scholars ascribed a collective notion of political empowerment to diverse interest groups, including communities of women and youth, as well as to collective decision-making related to tourism development (e.g., Coria & Calfucura, 2012; Farrelly, 2011; Weng & Peng, 2014).

In contrast, the psychological empowerment dimension accounts for ways that an individual resident's self-esteem is positively affected when external visitors appreciate their culture, causing individuals and communities to take pride in traditions and thereby increasing their willingness to share their experiences and knowledge with tourists. Echoing Sen's (2001) notion of development as freedom, Cole (2007) drew attention to this psychological empowerment, describing it as an individual's ability to overcome such barriers and to act in their own self-interest. Increased confidence, the pursuit of further education and training opportunities,

and improvements in the status of marginalized segments of society can also catalyze psychological empowerment for individual members of these groups (e.g., women, youth).

In an effort to move beyond conceptual approaches, researchers have quantitatively operationalized the social, political, and psychological dimensions of empowerment. Through survey research in three counties in northwestern Virginia, the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS) was developed. This quantitative application of the Scheyvens framework revealed that these three dimensions are highly intercorrelated (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014). When the scale was applied in a European context to investigate the relationship between perceptions of empowerment and community support for tourism along with place attachment, social and psychological empowerment was directly related to community cohesion, pride, and self-esteem (Strzelecka, Boley, & Strzelecka, 2017). However, economic empowerment was not strongly correlated with support for tourism because local residents valued pride, cultural identity, and community cohesion more than economic benefits. Those local residents who exhibited place attachment, place identity, place dependence, and nature bonding reported the greatest social and psychological benefits (Strzelecka, Boley, & Woosnam, 2017).

The application of the RETS in an ethnically diverse Japanese setting, including Brazilian and Japanese communities, revealed that Brazilian residents exhibit more social and psychological empowerment than Japanese residents (Boley, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2015; Maruyama, Woosnam, & Boley, 2016, 2017). Tourism fostered a sense of community spirit and connectedness to others that leads to opportunities to be involved in the community (Boley et al., 2015). The sense of fulfillment resulting from interactions between hosts and guests related to visitors' awareness of local culture and history. This finding is consistent with studies that include a "sense of pride" and "self-esteem" as indicators of cultural and political empowerment (Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2017; Boley & Johnson Gaither, 2016; Jensen, 2010; Mazro-Navaro, Pedraga-Iglesis & Vinzón, 2016). Although Brazilians perceived more social and psychological empowerment, Japanese residents

were more likely than their Brazilian counterparts to support tourism due to their dependence to economic benefits of tourism (Maruyama et al., 2017). This contradicts other results in Poland that found those who were more socially and psychologically empowered supported tourism more than those economically empowered (Strzelecka et al., 2017). This finding suggests that residents' cultural and social background has an influence on how they perceive empowerment and the extent to which they support tourism practices.

Focusing on empowerment of indigenous residents, scholars have researched the ways that individuals manage and present their culture in tourism venues, as well as the ways in which they legitimize claims to traditional lands from which they have been displaced (e.g., Hinch & Butler, 1996; Weaver, 2010). Scheyvens and Russell (2012) compared small-scale resorts owned by indigenous people with larger, foreign-owned resorts that lease land from indigenous Fijians. They found that small-scale businesses usually do not provide their employees with the same level of training opportunities as large-scale businesses, yet small-scale business owners are better able to assert the interests of local indigenous individuals and communities. When large-scale businesses used a liaison to facilitate the communication with indigenous landowners, empowering outcomes were more likely.

Environmentally conscious tourism practices that are controlled by the local residents can be capable of producing empowerment outcomes beyond the economic, social, political, and psychological dimensions. Ramos and Prideaux (2014) extended Scheyvens' (1999) framework by adding an environmental dimension. Environmental empowerment manifests through low-impact economic activities (e.g., ecotourism) that support conservation areas and communally managed lands (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014). For instance, habitat rehabilitation is more likely to occur when individuals are environmentally empowered. Such environmental empowerment is less likely to occur when residents lack control of tourism operations in their communities, when they are unaware of the impacts that tourism has on local natural resources, or when they are simply incapable of environmental protection due to extreme poverty (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014).

Theme #2: Gender Issues

Tourism supports the economic empowerment of all individuals on the basis of employment, income, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Yet, in some cases, tourism provides notable empowerment specifically for women. Gender empowerment is a focus in 26.4% of the studies reviewed here (Table 3). For instance, tourism can help establish financial independence from men or other family members (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). In addition to providing income, new employment opportunities can increase the likelihood of women engaging in entrepreneurial activities, possessing property, and enjoying a workload that is less physically demanding than traditional agricultural activities (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015; McMillan, O'Gorman, & MacLaren, 2011; Moswete & Lacey, 2015).

Gender empowerment through tourism has been shown to challenge entrenched perspectives about a woman's role being to raise children while men financially support the household (McMillan et al., 2011; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). In breaking cycles of subordinate gender roles, tourism has provided new sources of self-confidence, reduced feelings of emptiness, and a vocational education not otherwise available for women (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Tourism has also improved access to forms of education and engagement in social organizations that lead to further empowerment of women (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015; McMillan et al., 2011; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). New status for women created through tourism has also resulted in freedom from depravity, willingness to gain skills (e.g., for communication and negotiation), and an ability to take part in decision-making (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

Beyond educational outcomes and skill development, tourism can lead to improved intrapersonal outcomes for women, including self-respect, self-esteem, happiness, and self-confidence (McMillan et al., 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). Empowerment opportunities may stem from encounters with external visitors. Interactions with outsiders can shift negative gender stereotypes held by both hosts and their guests, leading to better recognition of fundamental rights for women (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Tourism incomes have been reinvested into women's groups established to increase respect for women, raise their social status, and contribute to

further fundraising for gender-empowering activities (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015; McMillan et al., 2014). In addition, benefits to women's family may improve male perceptions of gender roles within the home (Tran & Walter, 2015) and contribute to increased appreciation of women across a community (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

A cross-cultural comparison of gender outcomes found different perceptions among Japanese and American male and female residents working in tourism (Boley et al., 2017). American women perceive themselves to be more empowered than their male counterparts in terms of having a unique culture, a feeling of pride, having an outlet to share concerns, participating in community activities, and connectedness to the community. In contrast, significant difference between Japanese males and females did not exist. This led researchers to argue that "gender gap in tourism development is not a universal phenomenon" and is instead likely to be culturally determined (Boley et al., 2017, p. 124). In Oman, female students were more positive about women's ability to work in the tourism industry than their male counterparts and thus reported feeling more empowered by tourism-related opportunities than men did (Alsawafi, 2016). This research draws further attention to the structural barriers that women encounter when pursuing employment in tourism, including night shifts in hotels and other negative stereotypes associated with tourism jobs that are held among the local populace (Alsawafi, 2016).

Specifically in the ecotourism context, Tran and Walter (2014) outlined several sociocultural mechanisms related to empowerment for women. First is participation in decision-making, policy, planning, and administration of tourism activities. Second, women develop influence on decision-making over production and distribution of the benefits resulting from these tourism activities. This leads to more equitable gender roles and improved access to tourism-related resources (e.g., land, labor, credit, education, and public services). Finally, a state of empowerment may be achieved where women have full control over their own material welfare (Tran & Walter, 2014).

Agritourism is another context where researchers have explored empowerment of women. By emphasizing the agency of women to foster empowering

changes, Annes and Wright (2015) described a three-way process through which tourism can influence forms of power in the context of agritourism in France. First, women acquire the "power to" make decisions independently based on available resources. Then they develop "power with" to work with others to achieve their goals. Lastly, they obtain "inside power" to identify the sources of their subordination.

Theme #3: Employees Issues

A portion of the peer-reviewed scholarship explicitly focused on tourism and hospitality employees. For 17% of the articles, the thematic focus is centered on the empowerment of employees within the workplace, often within corporate hospitality cultures. For instance, the Organizational Empowerment Scale revealed that hospitality employee empowerment is a three-dimensional concept (Matthews et al., 2003). Employee empowerment is a function of the information employees possess about a company's goals and activities, the opportunities for creativity their position offers, and the extent to which one feels their opinions are heard. For instance, an employee's control of work-related decisions (e.g., the influence they have on determining a retirement period and the teams they are working with) directly influences their experience of empowerment in the workplace. This employee research offers much value to human resource managers aspiring to operate in the most cost-effective interests of a tourism company.

Cheung, Baum, and Wong (2012) examined the extent to which Chinese tourism hospitality students exhibit trust on behalf of management or have the freedom to make virtuous decisions. In this study, the researchers differentiate structural empowerment (e.g., the ability of employees to advance from a lower to higher levels of employment) with situational empowerment (e.g., an employee's freedom and autonomy to take actions without asking for approval from authority). When both forms of empowerment are present, enabled employees are motivated to generate new ideas (Louh, Tsaur, & Tang, 2014), to help their coworkers (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012), and to feel that their work is meaningful (Ro & Chen, 2011). Such psychological empowerment has been shown to increase job

satisfaction (Moura, Orgambidez-Ramos, Jones, & Jesus, 2015) and engagement in work activities beyond that required by their positions (Garg & Dhar, 2016; Moura et al., 2015). Luoh and colleagues (2014) and Ro and Chen (2011) both adapted a 12-item empowerment scale developed in psychology (Spreitzer, 1995) to the study of psychological empowerment of tourism employees. Their results suggest that employee empowerment manifests through the meaning they perceive their job to have, the feelings of competence and self-assurance they experience in the workplace, and their ability to independently influence their own work experience.

In contrast to these psychological perspectives, Lashley and McGoldrick (1994) focused on the ways that management influences employee empowerment. These researchers determined that an employee's perception of discretion, control, power, autonomy, responsibility, commitment, and enterprise were all factors that contribute to feelings of psychological empowerment. Across all of these writings, job standardization consistently hinders the experience of empowerment in their workplace.

Theme #4: Disempowerment Issues

A substantial portion of the articles in this review (11.3%) explicitly addressed the ways that tourism can often lead to the disempowerment of individuals and communities. As with empowerment, Scheyvens (1999) distinguishes between economic, psychological, social, and political dimensions of disempowerment. Economic disempowerment can occur when local elites or corporations monopolize economic benefits of tourism. Reduced access to tourism resources can also lead to feelings of apathy, depression, disillusionment, and confusion—typical outcomes of psychological disempowerment. Social disempowerment is characterized by disharmony within the community, loss of respect for traditional culture, unhealthy competition among local tourism businesses, and unhealthy by-products of tourism including crime, prostitution, begging, crowding, and displacement from traditional lands. Political disempowerment can materialize through autocratic leadership that limits community members from being involved in tourism-related decision-making (Scheyvens, 1999; Weng & Peng, 2014).

Lack of institutional capacity to develop the skills and training needed to succeed in tourism also contributes to disempowering outcomes for local communities (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014).

Another four-dimension framework has been used to characterize disempowerment in the context of tourism (Han, Wu, Huang & Yang, 2014). The first component here involves disempowerment resulting from lack of access to the means of production of tourism—that is, the life spaces and natural resources needed to develop tourism in a region. The inability of residents to access or control key information is a second component of this framework. Inequitable distribution of financial and social capital resulting from tourism-related activities is a third way that individuals can be disempowered by tourism. Finally, the fourth component relates to the need for reformation of government regulation that deprives local people of the opportunities to participate in tourism (Han et al., 2014). Hall (2013) coined the term “depo-tentia” to describe these types of disempowering outcomes. Just as involvement in decision-making is associated with empowerment, it has been shown across these writings that a lack of participation in decision-making and governance is directly associated with disempowerment.

Theme #5: Tourist Issues

A smaller portion (9.4%) of the writings focused on the empowerment of tourists. In one study utilizing an autoethnographic and blog analysis approach to evaluating disempowerment of Chinese shoppers (Y. Wang, Weaver, & Kwek, 2015), the concepts of soft and hard power were used to differentiate the ability of tourists to work out a satisfactory outcome with tourism vendors. Vendors may use threats and sanctions to disempower tourists in mass tourism contexts. The interplay between hard and soft power results in a “powerscape” among vendors that tourists may feel challenged to negotiate. In a shopping context, for example, soft power manifests through the use of gift-baiting or storytelling to promote certain products allegedly containing cultural or health benefits. Hard power, on the other hand, is present when buyers are coerced to purchase particular items without having an initial desire to do so. In these transactional situations, active resistance to

these pressures forms the basis of tourist empowerment (Y. Wang et al., 2015). Such tourist consumer power issues have even been researched in the context of travel-related web blogs (Kerr, Mortimer, Dickinson, & Waller, 2009).

Distinct from the gender issues among residents explored earlier, some research focused specifically on the empowerment of women travelers, paying special attention to “girlfriend getaways” (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2013). In a constructive grounded theory study, this form of travel resulted in empowerment of female travelers by improving their ability to reach goals, express themselves, and take responsibility as a mature traveler. Empowerment was the joint result of being relieved from family and social routines as well as feeling more comfortable and less self-conscious. Empowerment can even result from one’s sexual behavior during travel. For example, the extent that female travelers abandon social norms and sexual mores, even if only temporarily, may be related to the degree of empowerment they experience during travel (Berkychevsky, Gibson, & Poria, 2013). In the context of adventure tourism, female tourists negotiate a process structured by constraints (personal, sociocultural, practical) in order to access empowering benefits such as a sense of freedom or self-development (Doran, 2016). Adventure tourism contributes to women’s resourcefulness, strength, and independence. Going forward, any effort to create a comprehensive working definition of empowerment in the tourism context should account for these forms of empowerment that tourists experience.

Discussion

The wide range of conceptual and methodological approaches to research on the relationship between tourism and empowerment (Table 2), as well as the thematic emphases of this research (Table 3), parallels the dispersed nature of research on empowerment as it occurs in other disciplines (Table 1). Such diverse scholarly treatments of empowerment confuse our understandings of the concept and hinder the advancement of rigorous empirical research on the ways that empowerment results from tourism. In moving towards a reconciliatory definition of empowerment in tourism, it is useful to highlight several key issues identified in this review.

A first main point drawn from this systematic review is that empowerment has often been assessed as an outcome rather than a process. There is an evident bias in the scholarship towards unidimensional approaches that tend to focus on economic outcomes for local communities or gender-related outcomes for women. When studies do take a multidimensional approach to empowerment, there is often a reliance on Scheyvens (1999). Scheyvens’ influential framework was developed in the context of ecotourism and may not be comprehensive enough to account for other forms of tourism. Other multidimensional frameworks that have been developed by tourism scholars yet remain underutilized. Additionally, continuing application of Scheyvens’ framework may perpetuate an inadvertent bias towards *outcomes* rather than the *processes* leading to empowerment. This bias towards outcomes creates inconsistency with the process-based definitions of empowerment common in other social science disciplines (Table 1).

A second conclusion drawn from this review is that while 73.6% of the research on empowerment focused on outcomes for “hosts,” local residents are not the sole focus of empowerment writings. It is important to distinguish threads in the scholarship related to tourism resident-employees in a developing world context and research originating in developed countries that address employee empowerment in the corporate hospitality sector. What is meaningful to research in one context (e.g., lesser developed communities) may not necessarily be relevant to another context (e.g., hospitality employees), yet it must be conceded that empowerment can occur for individuals within the workplace as well as for residents of local communities. Tourists are yet another population present in the literature. To date, the distinct approaches taken within the literature on the empowerment of hospitality employees and the empowerment of tourists draws attention to the need for a broader, more inclusive conceptualization of empowerment that accounts for all individuals engaged in the phenomenon of tourism.

A final point drawn from this review is that there remains an unexplored question as to whether disempowerment occurs along the same continuum as empowerment. Is disempowerment simply the absence of empowerment, or is it in fact a distinct

concept with its own distinct characteristics? While this thematic analysis reveals that empowerment has been explored in numerous social science disciplines, discussions of disempowerment do not appear in these other disciplines. The attention to disempowerment seems to be particularly characteristic of the writings on tourism. It warrants further attention.

Defining Empowerment for Tourism Research

In order to promote cohesiveness across the scholarly writing on the topic, an essential step forward would be an agreed-upon working definition of tourism-related empowerment. In light of the ways that empowerment has been treated in other social sciences, and integrating the key summary points culled from our thematic review, we propose the following definition:

Empowerment is a multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement with the phenomenon of tourism.

Consistent with other social science approaches, this working definition recognizes the processual nature of empowerment and the changing dynamics of this process over time. Taking into consideration the thematic analysis of tourism writing, this definition also recognizes the potential for empowerment to occur for any units of social organization involved in tourism (e.g., local residents, women, employees, and tourists). By not emphasizing local residents, it avoids any explicit or implicit focus on tourism in developing countries. Also consistent with other social science perspectives, this definition acknowledges the need for multidimensional, context-specific approaches.

Future Directions

In terms of future research on tourism-related empowerment, the above definition infers several fruitful opportunities. First, researchers and tourism practitioners will find many opportunities in conceiving of empowerment as a multidimensional process. Longitudinal research conducted over

time, as well as periodic assessment and monitoring within the industry, will allow us to capture this processual nature of empowerment. Furthermore, accounting for all populations engaged in the tourism phenomenon will push new frontiers in the scholarship on tourism-related empowerment. Additionally, tourism operators, development specialists, and conscientious travelers may wish to consider the ways that the forms of tourism they are involved with—be this involvement as a host, guest, employee, or otherwise—contribute to empowerment for all individuals involved in the tourism endeavor. Only by considering the processes of all people involved in the phenomenon can we properly account for the full quotient of tourism's influence on empowerment.

Conclusion

Empowerment is often invoked for different purposes by different individuals. Here we endeavor to move our understanding forward by providing a working definition built upon a thematic analysis of the peer-reviewed research to date. This effort is an important step towards increased consistency in the application and understanding of the term empowerment in the context of tourism. The opportunities for future research identified here, which are by no means exhaustive, stand to bring further cohesion to the scholarship on tourism-related empowerment and better account for the ways that tourism influences those who are engaged with it.

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