



Cultural Roads and Itineraries

Concepts and Cases

Edited by

Jonathan Paquette · Aurélie Lacassagne ·
Christophe Alcantara

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Preface

Like many academic projects, this book results from a series of reflections that converged over the years. At the time of this book's conception, Aurélie Lacassagne and Jonathan Paquette had been working together for years on a number of collaborative projects—the most important of which related to “terroir” and cultural industries in Canada. As such, this project evolved from a variety of fieldwork that took place throughout the provinces of Ontario and Québec, wherein the place of roads became salient. Roads were a way of narrating regions, of narrating identity; roads enabled the stories of Canadian terroir that had only very recently been crafted. Roads, in a sense, provided spatial support for the implantation of terroir's imaginary. Outside of this collaboration, roads have been an important part of Aurélie's theoretical approach to French-Canadian and French-American literature. The importance of roads has also emerged in Jonathan's fieldwork in Asia. In Hong Kong, heritage and nature trails are an important component of the local cultural scene. While Jonathan's work focuses on museums and heritage policies, roads revealed another dimension of heritage in Hong Kong. Similarly, Christophe Alcantara's

work in communications and on the use of social media reached an interesting turning point when he took an interest in the representations of roads and selves on Instagram. Studying the social media practices of hundreds of Instagram users, Christophe's work found patterns in the picture-taking practices of users' that suggested their selfies were not as shallow as one might think; the roads portrayed in these images often revealed a new sense of spirituality and depth to those who took the pictures.

These different ideas and perspectives on roads converged in 2018, when we all met in Montréal for the Société Québécoise de science politique's annual meeting. This was the occasion where many of the ideas that are discussed in the pages of this book first took form.

It is with all of this in mind that this book aims to achieve two objectives. First, the book aims to discuss roads from an interdisciplinary perspective; it unites ideas, concepts, and notions from a number of different disciplines: history, geography, economics, political science, literature, philosophy, and many others. As such, the book engages with the works of many important philosophers and social scientists—notably Deleuze, Bakhtin, Heidegger, Simmel, Castells, among many others. Second, this book focuses on cultural roads, bringing us closer to disciplines that have already engaged with the cultural dimensions of roads, itineraries, paths, or routes. Notably, tourism studies, heritage studies, leisure studies, and regional development have all contributed to frameworks and concepts that further the understanding of the cultural aspect of roads. Thus, this book engages with the rich work that has emerged in these disciplines since the early 2000s and with greater force since the 2010s. The cases discussed in this book further the ongoing discussions and debates around the cultural aspect of roads; the cases we have selected and the approach we have privileged explore new concepts and test the boundaries of this object of study.

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1

Introduction

Jonathan Paquette, Aurélie Lacassagne,
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In the humanities and social sciences, the notion of the road has intersected with that of culture on many occasions to help us make sense of the world we live in. In Western philosophy, the notion of the road has been tied to movements, to temporality, and to the theme of becoming since the Eleatic school, bringing us, inevitably, to the question of being and eventually to the question of culture. Similarly, in literature, the road is a typical marker that has given a certain shape and style to the Greek novel. According to Mikhaïl Bakhtin, the time and space (chronotope) of the road give shape to adventure and the Greek novel retains its specific texture from it (Bakhtin, 1978, pp. 240–241). By extension,

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the road gives to the Greek hero the vital material to reveal his ethos and express his virtue. Likewise, the concept of the road has enabled many critical engagements with the concept of culture. In his sociology of culture, German sociologist Georg Simmel used the notion of the road to articulate his anthropological philosophy of culture. Just like culture, roads (and bridges) are relational; they are connective. Some would even argue that the road is, in Simmel's sociology of culture, a fundamental metaphor for culture; it distinguishes humans from other beings (Lapierre, 2000, p. 45). In anthropology, the way that cultures are structured and organized has given rise to important concepts that also speak to different conceptions of the road. For sedentary societies, roads are connectors that enable circulation and exchange between settlements. For nomadic societies, roads enable a vital trajectory. These common and formal categories were later the material for a new reflection on the road by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), who pursued their own reflections on nomadism and space through further conceptualization (e.g. smooth and striated spaces) (pp. 592–594). In the same way, contemporary sociologists have developed theoretical frameworks where the concept of the road has become the material for shaping whole new concepts. Its influences are perceptible in the development of the sociology of networks (Castells, 2000, 2011; Dagiral & Martin, 2017; Lazega, 1994), and most definitely crucial to the new paradigm of “mobilities” (Faist, 2013; Sheller & Urry, 2016; Urry, 2002) in the social sciences.

The notion of the road is not only a way to problematize culture and to develop new concepts in the humanities and social sciences, it also enables methodological reflection. Geography, urban planning, sociology, and archeology have used roads as a way of tracing human activity and for collecting data. The development of “go-along” interviews in qualitative research speaks to the importance of trajectories and roads in analysing social phenomena (Thompson & Reynolds, 2019). Go-along interviews rely on spatial and experiential qualitative data and are collected as the interviewer follows the research participant to collect stories, emotions, experiences, and other data (Evans & Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003; Sáenz de Tejada Granados & van der Horst, 2020). Social scientists use go-along interviews and follow participants to make

sense of a built or natural environment (Bergeron et al., 2014; Colley et al., 2016). The result is a trajectory—a typical path taken by a user or a unique trajectory practiced for the first time—that is later mapped and coupled with other data gathered with the interaction of the participant (Stiegler, 2021). Roads—that is, routes of circulation and paths—are not only material for data collection, they can also enable methodological reflection in other areas, including reflexivity. The figure of the road is a common narrative of ethnographic work. It is often used as a way to introduce self-reflection on fieldwork practices. For instance, many ethnographers, like Georges Condominas, have described the road as an essential element for understanding their deep relationships with their fieldwork. He has described how the roads to Vietnamese mountain villages enabled the perfect dose of introspection, where “hiking not only offered physical rewards, but intellectual ones” (Condominas, 1965, p. 108). These mountain paths were transitional moments where he could reflect deeply on his experience as an observer, as an ethnographer, and as a human being. How many times did roads offer a perfect meditative time and space to reflect on methods and on the transition between different social worlds?

Moreover, since the late 1990s, cultural roads have been increasingly studied in disciplines such as tourism studies, leisure studies, and heritage studies. These disciplines have reflected on the unique encounters between the two notions—roads and culture—as they have developed over time into a practical and conceptual hybrid. Researchers in these fields have taken stock of the progressive synthesis of these notions, as cultural roads, cultural routes, or cultural itineraries. Cultural tourism was a main driver of the rise of cultural roads as tourism, as leisure, and as heritage experience. Therefore, cultural roads are not only an interdisciplinary object of study; they are also an area of professional practice. The works of Nicola MacLeod (2016, 2017) and Deborah Hayes and Nicola MacLeod (2007, 2008) towards developing a number of conceptual constructs can help us better understand the relationship between cultural trails and their broader social and political environments. We are greatly indebted to their work in this book as they have organized the literature and contributed to bringing more clarity to the issue of trail planning and management, providing paths of thought that

have inspired part of the conversation that this book is attempting to further. Similarly, the publication of *Tourism and Trails* by Timothy and Boyd (2015) was an important milestone for the conceptualization of cultural roads; it is the first and most complete effort to organize the general literature on trails in tourism studies. In the pages of this book, a whole chapter is dedicated to providing a typological understanding of cultural roads, an essential tool for further thought, and one that also inspired our own work in this book.

Following these important contributions, this book attempts to take the discussion on cultural roads in two different directions. First, this book takes a step back from tourism studies, leisure studies, and heritage studies in order to further the conversation on cultural roads with a broader set of disciplines, namely those in the humanities and social sciences. By reaching out to these disciplines, we hope to extend the circle of disciplines involved in this interdisciplinary research programme. In Simmelian terms, extending the circle of interests and ideas amounts to extending and developing a new sense of (research) community (Simmel, 1999). Concepts from history, philosophy, literature, and political science can most certainly enrich how we approach cultural roads. Second, while the book takes a step back, particularly so in the first part, it also zooms back in. Through a series of broader theoretical reflections and considerations, the book draws its focus back to the development of the cultural road and cultural itineraries with a new conceptual apparatus that can inspire new questions for research and new ideas for practice.

1.1 Concepts and Cases

This book is divided into three parts: (1) cultural roads in research, practice, and creativity; (2) fundamental cultural roads and cultural memory; and (3) public policies and cultural itineraries. These different parts are designed to continue the conversation in areas that can help pursue critical thinking about cultural roads. While the first part of the book offers a synthesis and an overview of the current state of the literature, the two other parts rely on cases and all bring forward important concepts

that can help inform future research in the field. The second part of the book offers a fresh look at cultural roads that belong to a deep transcultural imaginary. The purpose of this part is to reunite three fundamental cases of cultural roads and interrogate anew. Cultural roads, we argue, often constitute a common good; they belong to an important cultural imaginary and mobilizing this imaginary for tourism or for political aspirations raises critical ethical issues. This part explores the interaction between cultural roads as an imaginary part of cultural memories and itinerary construction as a prescriptive interpretation and objectification of these roads. The third part of the book deals with itineraries—with trails and paths—and draws attention to the strong relationship between cultural itineraries and public policies. This part aims to bring the reality of cultural roads and the world of public policy theory and analysis closer together.

1.1.1 Cultural Roads in Research, Practice, and Creativity

Chapter 2 offers a synthesis of cultural roads in the humanities and social sciences. While this chapter does not claim to include every single instance where the intersection between roads and culture is explored in these disciplines, it does provide a rather large panorama of the most influential encounters between the two concepts (roads and culture). These encounters are explored in philosophy, in history, and in geography through different academic traditions.

Chapter 3 presents how cultural roads are intertwined in two histories: an academic history and a history of practice. This chapter presents the development of expertise and knowledge of trail management as a dialogue between academics and practitioners, as well as with local and international institutions. National park systems, historic districts, and tourism are all components that set the table for the formalization and systematization of trail management beginning in the early part of the twentieth century. These practices have generated a fundamental pool of knowledge that has been seminal for the development of trail management and ultimately for cultural roads. The national and

local levels enabled the development of practices that helped organize cultural roads. On the international level, the growth of multilateral institutions in the period following the Second World War created the conditions necessary to create a normative environment for cultural roads. UNESCO, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the European Council, and the International Council for Museums have all been important catalysts for the development of the practice, and for the production of international norms that have informed professionals and national organizations' practices in terms of handling the development and management of cultural roads. The concept of cultural tourism has been an important policy referential (Chauvière, 2006; Jobert, 1992; Muller, 2000) that has shaped decision-making and public policy in support of cultural roads.

Chapter 4 of this part engages with one of the most important concepts in literature, one borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin: the chronotope. Building on the work of Bakhtin, Aurélie Lacassagne and Thierry Bissonnette help us understand the conceptual relationship between roads and literature, and open a window for a reflection on the importance of roads in literature. The chronotope of the road is discussed here in the context of French-Canadian and French-American literature.

1.1.2 Fundamental Cultural Roads and Cultural Memory

The three chapters of the second part of the book bring together important cultural roads that belong to different national and international cultural memories. Chapter 5 brings us the Ways of St. James in Spain and France. This chapter discusses important issues pertaining to the changing uses and meanings of cultural tourism in these roads covering southwestern France and northern Spain. Its author, Christophe Alcantara, reflects on the changing narrative of these cultural roads, one that sees cultural heritage emerging as a way to organize the experience of visitors. For Alcantara, the paths to Santiago de Compostela are increasingly reinscribed in the policy logic of heritage preservation. In that regard, the intervention of the European Commission can be seen as an

important turning point for the political role played by this pathway in the construction of a certain idea about Europe's heritage and identity. Chapter 6 also includes a critical reflection on cultural roads through an exploration of the renewed Silk Roads. Aurélie Lacassagne brings forth the different institutional and historical inscriptions of the Silk Roads. From this historical and organic trade route, to follow the terminology established by Timothy and Boyd (2015), a cultural road has become the material for the construction of a "Eurasian" symbolic imaginary; it has provided the narrative material for UNESCO to organize cultural heritage sites in Central Asia; it has become the symbolic and political tool that is behind the construction of an economic axis and a commercial itinerary—on land and sea—between the People's Republic of China, Europe, and eastern Africa.

Chapter 7 brings us back to a different cultural time and space and to a different era of travel. The Grand Tour, discussed in the pages of this chapter, constitutes an essential historical case study for tourism and heritage studies. Building on the seminal reflections of Towner (1984, 1985), the authors provide a new reading of the methodological and theoretical value and significance of the Grand Tour for understanding cultural roads. The Grand Tour, and its time and space, provides ample material for thinking about the articulation between cultural roads as cultural imaginaries and the development of objective trajectories—of touristic and educational travels on European territories over centuries. On a methodological level, it has been well-acknowledged as an excellent case study of the evolution and transformation of touristic itineraries and trajectories over time. On a theoretical level, this chapter raises the issue of the morality of cultural roads; it brings into the discussion the works of John Chetwode Eustace (1762–1815), John Ruskin (1819–1900), as well as travel guide Thomas Nugent (1700–1772). Cultural roads are moral narratives; they are described and transmitted as prescriptions of behaviour regarding the good life and the moral self. Travellers, their intentions and methods of travel, are also equally shaped by moral considerations, mostly by the aspiration to model moral virtue. The Grand Tour is most certainly one of the best case studies for understanding the long-standing relationship between travel, cultural roads, and morality. The moral debates and issues that it generates for travel

and travellers are certainly still echoed in part in accounts of personal travel today. In Western societies, the Grand Tour is the archetype of secular travel, its mental and moral framework.

1.1.3 Public Policy and Cultural Itineraries

Chapter 8 discusses one of the most interesting and complex cases of cultural itinerary development in Asia. Hong Kong's heritage is traversed by different layers of social and political history. Institutionally, Hong Kong heritage is at the crossroads of two, if not three, imperial histories. Hong Kong was part of imperial China until it became a British colony in the earlier part of the nineteenth century; it has now returned to Chinese sovereignty and has been governed as a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China since 1997. Hong Kong is densely populated, but it is also a territory that has a rural history and vast amounts of protected land. Hong Kong is also multicultural; it is a land defined by its native population, different Chinese minorities, southern Chinese populations, European settlers (British and Portuguese), and other migrant populations from Asia and the Middle East. This chapter brings two important pieces together to understand the development and evolution of trails and cultural itineraries in Hong Kong. The first element is a conventional reading, based on the complexity of Hong Kong identities and politics, which creates a conversation between localism and nostalgia. This political reading offers an important, albeit very common, understanding of heritage management in Hong Kong. The second lens offered by the author of the chapter focuses on policy windows; it is a complementary analysis of the forces behind trail management in Hong Kong, a reading that relativizes the overly political reading of antagonisms in trail development. This chapter offers a conceptual element that extends beyond the case of Hong Kong, and that can inform how we understand the evolution of trails through different short but determining moments and policy windows.

As a way to support and diversify small farming activities, and as a tool to organize regional tourism, agritourism has become increasingly popular since the late 1980s. Whether it is from the intervention of

departments of agriculture, or departments of tourism, many policies have been put in place in order to sustain economic diversity in farming regions. Over time, governments have diversified their strategies and new policy instruments have been promoted to sustain the growth of food and crafts-based tourism. In Chapter 9, the authors interrogate how the notion of terroir has enabled different ideas about territory and identity, and how it has influenced different kinds of cultural itineraries.

The three remaining chapters make salient the importance of heritage and culture in the development of cultural relations. In Chapter 10, Christopher Gunter brings forward the place of culture walks as a tool for social change. Building on the case of the city of Ottawa, the author illustrates how the urban space can be a tool to narrate and reassemble different stories about the city, and in particular, his chapter evidences how walks have a powerful capacity to create community, and in this case, support labour activism in the city. Chapter 11 furthers our views and understanding of cultural itineraries by looking at museums and their interactions in the global world. In their analysis of the evolution of French museums, Martine Corral-Regourd, and Nicolas Peyre demonstrate how the museum is following new itineraries, and how the development of loans and the fetishism for museum brands (Le Louvre, Centre Pompidou and many others) has created cultural conditions in which the museum is itinerant, and increasingly nomad, following a new set of institutional and cultural trajectories. Finally, Chapter 12 discusses memories of exploration itineraries and their influence on local heritage. By focusing on the continued presence and reference of French explorers in the United States, Canada, and Australia, this chapter establishes the relationship between historical itineraries and local heritage. In particular, this chapter discusses how French explorers are used in toponymy, for heritage and natural trail, as well as for other purposes, including cultural diplomacy.

In gathering contributions anchored in heritage studies and tourism studies, as well as contributions from the humanities and social sciences, this collected edition aims to further the discussion on cultural roads, and aims to expand the breadth of concepts and methodologies to explore the rich social, administrative, and political reality of cultural roads.

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Part I

**Cultural Roads in Research, Practice,
and Creativity**



2

Cultural Roads and Itineraries in the Humanities and Social Sciences

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2.1 Introduction

A person follows the path, a vehicle travels on the road, a ship holds the course, a plane flies in an air corridor. What all have in common is that they follow a route that owes nothing to chance. Whether they belong to the past or the present, all roads have a personality. And whether they are metaphorical or not, all roads have a history too. But what is the relationship between the barely traveled track, the Roman road that seems

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to have been there forever, the saturated highway of modern times, and the “Silk Road” or “Route 66”? What exactly are we talking about? Is the road simply a tangible, reversible, and repeatable route between an origin and a destination? According to Pérol, the road is “A beautiful subject without a doubt, which touches all the disciplines of the humanities, all the historical periods and all the fields of the historian” (Pérol, 2007, p. 3).

This chapter provides an interdisciplinary overview of the notion of roads, with a particular focus on cultural roads and cultural itineraries. The notion of roads is characterized by a rich cultural, historical, and disciplinary diversity. The complexity of this notion is obvious at many different levels. For example, from a linguistic perspective, a number of germane expressions exist in the English language to define roads as ways, paths, trajectories, itineraries, etc. Some of these expressions are easily translatable or available in different languages (*chemins*, *camino*, *strada*, *via*, *weg*, etc.), but some notions are not easily translatable, and are therefore not only shaped by linguistic conditions but also culturally bounded. The German expression “*holzwege*” is a good example. Used in Heidegger’s work (1950) as a theme to federate a number of his essays in a single publication, the expression evokes some of his thoughts as a trajectory. But the idea he chose is extremely culturally specific. The German expression conveys the idea of emergent, unplanned forest paths, which are also non-directive; they lead to no specific destination. As a result, the English translations have often chosen to preserve the German word—*holzwege*—to keep this cultural relationship alive in the minds of readers. Occasionally “off the beaten track” (Heidegger, 2002) is used in English translations, which is a creative way to translate the notion into good idiomatic English, but also create/superimpose a new sense over the German title. The French translation of this work has privileged an expression—“*Les chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*” (Heidegger, 1986)—that can be deceptive and conveys only part of the cultural reality that *holzwege* encompasses; it is also prone to a sardonic reception as it implies a “dead end”. This example serves to illustrate the complexity of roads as an object of study, and to introduce the importance of approaching roads with a certain cultural and disciplinary awareness.