

## **A decennial reflection: success, change and uncertainty**

This editorial marks the beginning of the tenth anniversary year of the *Journal of Place Management and Development (JPMD)*, which was launched back in 2008. The world of academic journals is competitive, but in its short lifespan, the *JPMD* has made a remarkable impact on the specialist discipline of place scholarship. In the 2016 annual pre-Christmas meeting between the *JPMD* editorial board and our publishers Emerald, we took the opportunity to reflect on some of the most recent performance metrics for the journal and they are so impressive that they deserve another airing here. First, in terms of usage, at the time of publication *JPMD* articles had received 30,599 downloads in 2016, a 29 per cent increase on the previous year. Moreover, these downloads had a healthy distribution globally, with the top ten country locations for downloads identified as the UK, Malaysia, Australia, China, Indonesia, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and the USA – that is four continents if anyone is counting.

The year 2016 was also when the *JPMD* was listed in the newly launched *Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)*, which aims to “extend the universe of publications in Web of Science to include high-quality, peer-reviewed publications of regional importance and in emerging scientific fields” (Wokinfo, 2015 [www.wokinfo.com](http://www.wokinfo.com)). In terms of citation performance, the journal is on a steep upward trajectory, delivering a CiteScore of 2.16 in 2016 based on Scopus data. This means the *JPMD* is currently ranked ninth out of the 122 of journals in the Urban Studies subject classification code in Scopus. The future looks bright too. In our tenth anniversary year, we are expanding the number of issues of the journal to four per annum, with an average of six papers in each. This is to deal with the large increase in submissions to the journal, which rose by 35 per cent in 2016. Taken together, these figures bear testament to the growing interest in the subject of place management and development globally, and the desire by a broad community of place scholars to undertake and publish work of high quality.

But what are the reasons for the journal’s success? Anniversaries are always good opportunities to reflect, and it is perhaps worth revisiting the original expectations for the *JPMD* as set out in our first editorial, written ten years ago (almost to the day). Looking back, our first concern was whether the already crowded academic journal landscape really needed another periodical. The very fact that the *JPMD* has lasted ten years, has steadily risen up the impact factor rankings and has been included in key abstracting and other indexing systems offer a reassuring “yes”. Whilst the majority of papers published within the *JPMD* are academic, it is also the official journal of the Institute of Place Management, whose membership is made-up predominantly of practitioners. Therefore, as well as being useful to an academic audience, the journal also provides insight and influence to the ‘real world’. Put otherwise, the journal has provided an outlet not only for research into important issues such as sustainability, community cohesion, citizenship, health and well-being, but, just as importantly, it explains what these findings might mean for people engaged in the practical endeavour of trying to make better places. Undoubtedly, this dual focus on academic and practitioner worlds has widened the journal’s appeal and consequent readership and popularity.



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Another one of the original aims of the journal was (and still is) to provide an interdisciplinary and international vehicle to build and bring knowledge about places together. It is always a challenge working across disciplines. From the practical perspective of building a community of around 1,000 reviewers able to provide constructive feedback to authors across a variety of subject areas, to the differences in style and method we see in the papers submitted, the learning curve for the editorial team has been very steep. Nevertheless, the fact that we are ranked for impact across six subject areas shows how cross disciplinary the journal has become. Similarly, both our author profiles, Editorial Board make-up and download figures demonstrate how international the *JPMD* is. But, we must not rest on our laurels. We have a number of readers and subscribers in countries that are under-represented by authors, such as China and Malaysia. We feel strongly that the *JPMD* should give visibility to all manner of places and voice to all types of place researchers and practitioners. We, therefore, extend an invitation to potential Guest Editors of future special issues from such countries and locations. Please get in touch with the Editorial Team if you have an idea for a special issue that will extend the geographical frontiers of place management.

This brings us on to the other key aim of the journal highlighted in the first editorial: Bringing “place” to prominence. Place is a context for so much production and consumption activity, but ten years ago the “place” or the space in which businesses traded, marketers persuaded and consumers bought, ate, visited and enjoyed experiences was very overlooked in the management literature. The towns, cities and other locations that provide the stage for this activity were often taken for granted or completely ignored. Of course, the discipline of geography has developed a sophisticated understanding of space and place, and looking through the references cited by authors in the journal we are pleased to see a steady improvement in the critical appreciation and understanding of such concepts over the last ten years, from authors outside of the geography discipline. This is a direct result of our editorial steer. We want the papers published in the *JPMD* to more accurately reflect the influence place has on people, systems, networks and outcomes. Only then, will the public policy implications of place be truly recognised and the importance of place management universally understood.

Aside from our important anniversary and the continued upward trajectory of this journal, 2016 has been an “eventful” year. Most notably, the continued political fallout of the European migrant influx from the Middle East combined with Brexit and Trump’s victory in the US presidential election signal that political change is afoot. Politics invariably creates uneven regimes of development and investment, meaning some places lose out whilst others gain, seemingly, at their expense. Countries create their own lexicon to describe such place inequities. In the UK, for example, we talk of the North–South Divide to capture the differences between the wealth of London and the surrounding South East region, compared with lower economic power and high relative rates of deprivation in Northern English towns and cities. In the USA they talk of Rust Belts; regions of the country in the Midwest and some North Eastern states characterised by declining heavy industry and an economically disadvantaged population. Indeed, it is these very place inequities that appear to have stimulated the populist revolution in 2016, allowing Trump to turn Rust Belt Pennsylvania from Democratic blue back to Republican red (partly on a promise of industrial reinvestment there), and causing former industrial areas of the UK to vote firmly for Brexit in the hope

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of a better or different economic future. Furthermore, recent and ongoing political machinations in, for example, France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, suggest such seismic populist upheavals may not yet be finished. These developments act as a reminder that there is a new type of politics emerging, at least in the West, which will have wide-ranging implications for places and how they are managed. It remains to be seen whether the next ten years sees a rebalancing of previous place inequities through political intervention, or simply a reordering of those places that gain and those that lose out.

Turning to this issue of the journal, our first academic paper looks at an area of place development that is, thanks to rising life expectancy, likely to become ever more prevalent in the coming years. Increasingly, residents of developed nations who retire from work are choosing to live in other, less-developed countries. In “International retirement migration and Thai stakeholders’ views: a Japanese case study”, Ann Ashton and Noel Scott investigate Thai stakeholders’ perceptions of developing as a destination for international retirement migration, specifically retirees relocating from Japan (a country whose life expectancy and percentage of population over 65 years old is amongst the highest in the world). By employing a qualitative approach, with data collected through focus groups and in-depth interviews with 35 industry participants in Chiang Mai and Bangkok, the research finds that whilst considerable new real estate development and services have been created specifically for these retirees in recent years, there is a lack of stakeholder collaboration in catering to this market. Moreover, local resident knowledge of the retirees’ culture and language is lacking, along with a need for improved policy and planning support from the government. The authors provide guidelines for stakeholders, government and local communities that can help to make the outcomes of retirement migration more appealing, thus contributing to the success of places developed to cater for this growing market.

Jordi de San Eugenio Vela, Joan Nogué and Robert Govers’ paper, “Visual landscape as a key element of place branding”, aims to situate landscape consumption within the context of place branding strategies, understood as one of the most current economies of signs and spaces. To this end, the paper deploys a meta-analysis, that is, an extensive review and interpretation of the literature related to visual landscape and place branding. This leads to a tentatively proposed approach to landscape-infused place branding theory. Within this framework of symbolic place consumption, the paper provides some preliminary evidence on the important role played by the visual landscape and its capacity for symbolic evocation in the projection and imageability of dreamed (a priori) and/or experienced (*in situ*) geographies.

Another area of place development that has become increasingly popular over recent years is that of medical tourism, with people travelling to other countries to obtain medical treatment on account of it being less costly, or simply unavailable domestically. Ahmed Ebrahim and Subhadra Ganguli’s “Strategic priorities for exploiting Bahrain’s medical tourism potential” investigates the viability of developing Bahrain as a medical tourism destination and how this could be achieved. By taking into account that research assessing medical tourism competitiveness is difficult to obtain, the study fills an existing gap by providing a distinct and comprehensive evaluation method of such competitiveness through a structured analysis of relevant market data in Bahrain. The findings indicate that Bahrain has the potential to attain competitiveness in the medical tourism sector through a combination of industry-specific management strategies that

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facilitate effective public-private partnerships, reinvent healthcare legislation and encourage investment in medical tourism infrastructure. By determining best practice, prioritising improvement opportunities and enhancing performance relative to stakeholders' expectations and responsible tourism development, the authors produce a strategy for establishing Bahrain as a medical tourism destination.

In "Discursive construction of the legitimacy of a place marketing project: the case of North Karelia", Juha Halme seeks to theoretically explain the significance of discourse in the construction of the legitimacy of place marketing practice, and to illustrate empirically how this is done in the "genre of strategy". The paper applies a critical discourse analysis perspective and utilizes a theoretical framework of four legitimization strategies of authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoesis to analyse how the legitimacy of a place-marketing project carried out in the region of North Karelia, Finland, is discursively constructed within strategic project documentation. The paper presents an original perspective on the legitimacy of place marketing projects by introducing discourse as a central element in the construction of legitimacy. This is especially useful for critical purposes as it allows the discourses that legitimise place-marketing practice to be placed under scrutiny, hence opening up the possibility for alternative discourses to emerge.

Our final academic paper looks at another place development that has risen to prominence over recent years. Knowledge-based urban development – that is, the development of locations as enclaves for those working in specific, usually technologically oriented industries – has become increasingly ubiquitous. Whilst the primary driver of these developments is of course employment oriented, in order to ensure that a workforce is attracted and retained there is a challenge for those involved in their creation to imbue a sense of place into development plans. Surabhi Pancholi, Tan Yigitcanlar and Mirko Guaralda's paper, "Governance that matters: identifying placemaking challenges of Melbourne's Monash Employment Cluster", adopts a multidimensional conceptual framework of place making to investigate a knowledge and innovation space case through a qualitative analysis approach involving a range of key stakeholders. The study scrutinises the prominence of place making as a strategy in the development of knowledge and innovation spaces, with a specific focus on distinguishing the role of governance. The study finds that governance is critical in facilitating place making in knowledge and innovation spaces, and that place making practices in these locations benefit from adopting a multidimensional approach.

This issue's practitioner paper contribution is by Katie Swanson and is based on her recently completed DBA research. Her work looks at the concept of "love" in relation to destinations. Whilst love is a highly complex emotion, tourists often talk about "falling in love" with the places they visit. Following on from preliminary research reported in this journal, this practitioner piece focuses more upon how the concept of "destination brand love" manifests itself (through an investigation of tourists' words, photographs and collages). As a practitioner piece, the paper does offer some helpful explanation and guidance to place managers as to why acknowledging "love" could be beneficial in relation to management and communication strategies. In doing this, the piece also raises some questions which may be of interest to academics – namely, is "love" a useful concept to help understand the complicated relationships some people have with some places? Do people "love" the place or the place brand? We look forward to future research in this area addressing some of these fundamental questions.

Finally, this issue includes a book review of a recent Routledge publication *Advertising and Public Memory: Social, Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Ghost Signs* edited by Schutt *et al.* (2016). Reading through the contributions in this text is a reminder of the importance of signs as place-ordering, geo semiotic devices (Scollon and Scollon, 2003), an issue which appears to be attracting fresh and engaging perspectives in academic thinking (Denis and Pontille, 2014). Those of us who have spent too many hours navigating the world's airports will probably be aware of the importance of signage colours and text and sign emplacement, in governing how we navigate and understand airport space. Such observations suggest that signs are certainly something scholars of place management and development could look at more in the future.

Looking back on this issue and the last ten years we are incredibly proud of what we have achieved – but, of course, our success is completely dependent upon the authors, reviewers and readers of the *JPMD*. Without authors we would have no papers, without reviewers we would have no quality standards, and without readers, we would have no journal. So, we would like to thank you all very much [...] and here's to the next ten years!

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#### References

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