Guest editorial

Responsible tourism and place making

Sustainable development and placemaking can be seen encompassing a range of aspects of place management; marketing and branding, including increasing tourist numbers to improve the economy of a destination; attracting appropriate inward investment, while also attempting to preserve a destination's traditional industries; and enhancing the quality of life of all the place's stakeholders (Maheshwari *et al.*, 2011). Thus, topics that can fall under this broad perspective of what can contribute to sustainable and responsible tourism will include the preservation of all aspects of a place's cultural heritage: gaining favourable media attention about the place; appropriate place governance; and consistent efforts towards infrastructure regeneration and improvement. All of these issues have been covered in the Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places, an annual event which is held each year on the Greek island of Corfu. The Institute of Place Management has been supporting the Symposium since its inception in 2014, and from 2017 will organise the event in association with its Responsible Tourism Special Interest Group. This special issue is devoted to a selection of papers from the Symposium that address issues relating to responsible tourism and placemaking.

The theme of the first symposium, "Responses to the decline in mass tourism – engaging stakeholders and effecting positive change", reflected the global decline in mass tourism as travellers, who are increasingly choosing to travel independently; or with smaller tour operators, seeking more authenticity in their vacation experiences. It also reviewed the responsible tourism issues, focusing on the initiatives that move away from the current mass tourism model, in particular, challenging the continued growth of all-inclusive tourism.

Focusing on the theme of "Connecting people and places", the second symposium recognised that each destination "needs to focus on […] differentiation […] define its own niche markets and serve them accordingly […] to establish their position in the global tourism market" (Sotiriadis and Varvaressos, 2015, p. 330), and most importantly, achieve this in a way that means this position becomes sustainable and does not cause any further societal or environmental degradation.

The third symposium concerning "Thinking and re-thinking about places" reflected developments in both the theory and practice of place management and marketing with places and spaces being contested, formed and re-formed.

Different forms of tourism not only take place in different types of tourism spaces, but can also lead to transformations in both the natural and the physical built environment of tourism destinations. In Greece and the Greek islands, many of these transformations have come about due to these destinations' historic reliance on a mass-tourism model, which has led to the development of tourism infrastructure and services provided, particularly along its coastal areas.

Moreover, mass tourism based on the tourists' desire for "sun and sea" has also led to the creation of a high tourism season in many such destinations during the peak hot summer months of July and August, and now many of these destinations are attempting to make changes to counter this problem. Thus, while tourism is seen as an agent of

change, many of its impacts are deemed to be negative, even though tourism may bring the much-needed economic benefits to destinations.

The first paper in this special issue focuses on narratives of those experiencing tourism developments on the Greek island destination of Santorini. The final paper in this issue, comes full circle to offer a practitioner account of the way tourism has developed in the resort of Arillas on the Greek island destination of Corfu. The papers in this special issue all have one key theme in common, the way tourism developments started to improve the lot of a place and were embraced in an almost romanticised manner, through disenchantment and the occurrence of problems brought about by the volatile nature of such a highly competitive industry, to the current situation, where destinations and attractions now have to be re-imagined and reinvented, whether these occupy physical places and tourism spaces or exist in a digital virtual world.

While the phenomenon of mass tourism may have improved the fortunes of many Mediterranean destinations since the 1980s, Maria Lichrou, Lisa O'Malley and Maurice Patterson recognise that the term "mass tourism" is now not only used in a derogatory way, but the practice is also seen to be at odds with the notion of responsible tourism. Their paper examines tourism development as experienced by the people living and working in a tourism destination, thus drawing heavily on a narrative perspective that gives emphasis to local voices. Such tourism development has improved the economy of many Greek destinations and contributed to the improved social mobility of these destinations' residents. However, tourism development has also brought tensions within local societies, such as those on the Greek island of Santorini that are explored in this article, which examines tourism developments as a particular cultural experience.

Kavos is a popular tourism destination located at the southernmost point of Corfu. The place has received notoriety and a great deal of negative publicity in recent years due to the portrayal on British television, particularly in "reality"-style programmes, of irresponsible tourism behaviours of young British holidaymakers who favour the resort. Nicola Williams-Burnett and Julia Fallon have taken an approach that, therefore, includes insights into both the physical and social aspects of placemaking. Their paper compares and contrasts the place's telepresence image with the way Kavos is perceived by members of the local community. While explaining how the place has changed over the past 40 years through the development of mass tourism from a relatively small fishing village into a destination that is portrayed as one for hard partying where anything goes; they propose that the reality is that this image is unbalanced. When such programmes focus on only one narrow tourist segment in a high season that lasts no more than three months of the year, such portrayals neglect changing patterns throughout the year that includes older tourists, couples and families who visit Kavos in the shoulder months either side of the high season, and neglect many other of the place's stakeholders including those that live and work in the place all year round. This paper also broadened the focus of irresponsible tourism behaviours to those not only of tourists, but also of some of the individuals and businesses that provide tourism services. Another impact on placemaking that is raised in this article concerns the repatriation of business profits away from the island, and the low fees accommodation providers can be offered by tour operators, highlighting some of the reasons for lack of investment in improving the infrastructure and facilities in the resort.

The characteristic of seasonality also lead to situations where many tourism service providers across the Mediterranean do not undertake their roles on a full-time basis,

because they are often forced to undertake other activities to contribute to their annual household income. Lúcia Pato and Elisabeth Kastenholz consider these issues with regards to tourist lodging providers in two interior rural regions of Portugal (Dão-Lafões and Douro). Their research findings' evidence that this tends to lead majority of the lodging providers in these regions lacking in a professional or entrepreneurial approach to this aspect of their livelihoods, and consequently, they undertake only limited marketing activities. Their cluster analysis did find that the small number of lodging providers who approached their marketing in a more professional and entrepreneurial manner were much more successful, and consequently, more satisfied with the performance of their tourism businesses. They conclude that a more systematic marketing effort apparently pays off, increases occupancy rates, profitability of the business, leads to more satisfaction amongst suppliers and a different type of involvement with other companies through networking. All this suggests the possibility of a virtuous circle of a more active attitude together with more professional marketing orientation and action leading to individual business success, a more positive outlook on the future, more investment in new product development, continuous adaptation to the market, networking to improve the experience product and continuous success that might actually have a contribution for sustainable rural destination development.

Taking the case of the Geevor Tin Mine Museum, Timothy Jung and M. Claudia tom Dieck discuss the way technological developments can provide various ways to enhance the visitor experience, pre-site, on-site and post-visit at cultural heritage places, and thus, bringing to this special issue a consideration of the virtual digital world's impact on physical places in a tourism context. The article focuses on the contribution of particular technological developments to sustainable tourism growth, through increasing virtual accessibility to cultural heritage places. The authors present a theoretical framework for future technology integration through a conceptual model of value co-creation that explains ways in which cultural heritage places can introduce a combination of easy-to-use applications that incorporate the enhancement of objects and artefacts through fully immersed (virtual) or overlaid (augmented) digital content, along with 3D printing of personalised souvenirs, to enhance visitors' experiences.

In the first of two practitioner papers in this special issue, Guenther Botschen, Josef Bernhart and Kurt Promberger's "brand-driven identity development of places" (BIDP) approach provides a structured three-phase model that can serve as a practical guide for the development of places. BIDP is a circular, three-phase model starting with the definition of the intended place brand identity, which in phase two becomes translated into concrete touch point experiences along the main constituents of the place, finally materialising into the new place format. This article exemplifies the way this model works in practice through the presentation of a case study where the BIDP approach was implemented in the City of Innsbruck, although the authors also consider how such an action research approach could be taken to create a refreshed brand-driven identity for the resort of Arillas in Corfu, the place about which the final paper in this special issue relates to.

Alexandros Christou has established Green Corfu, an alternative holiday tourism portal and tour operator in the resort of Arillas. His article presents examples of a range of much less formally implemented placemaking initiatives occurring in the resort that have been enabled by a range of local organisations reacting in a bottom-up way to

improve the tourism infrastructure and services, and which have been provided in a direct response to two key issues:

(1) the economic crisis that has had a particularly hard effect on Greece; and

(2) the demise of mass "sea and sun" tourism to Corfu that had been one of the first of the Greek islands to be developed for tourism by UK package holiday companies in the 1980s.

This article also evidences the positive results of these initiatives to not only physical placemaking, but also to community empowerment and engagement and civic pride among the local community.

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References

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Sotiriadis, M.D. and Varvaressos, S. (2015), "A strategic analysis of the greek leisure tourism: competitive position, issues and challenges", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 320-332.

Further reading

Buckley, R. (2012), "Sustainable tourism: research and reality", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 528-546.