

4th Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places, 24-27 April 2017

The Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places has been held annually since 2014. Now in its fourth year, the Symposium aims to develop both the theory and practice of place management and place marketing. Having had close links with the Institute of Place Management (IPM) since its inception, from 2017, the Symposium is now organised by the IPM at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Corfu is a small Greek island in the Ionian Sea, located to the East of the heel of the boot of Italy, and to the West of the southernmost part of Albania and the westernmost part of the Greek mainland. Because the island's economy is heavily reliant upon tourism, the 1st Symposium held in 2014, focusing on the theme "Responses to the decline in Mass Tourism – Engaging Stakeholders and Effecting Positive Change", presented a collection of papers mainly reflecting the global decline in mass tourism, and considering initiatives that could more sustainably help move Corfu and similar Mediterranean destinations away from this model, especially in the context of challenging the negative effects of all-inclusive holidays.

The 2nd Symposium held in 2015 focused on "Connecting People and Places" and reflected the increasing quest for authenticity in tourists' experiences, both from a supply and demand perspective, as issues of "connecting" people and places become important for place managers and marketers, for a wide range of tourism-related businesses, and also for tourists themselves.

The year 2016 marked the 300th anniversary of the 2nd *Siege of Corfu* in 1716, when, while Corfu was then under Venetian rule, there was an attempted Turkish invasion of the island. The island was next taken by France (1797), then it fell to the Russians, then the Ottoman Empire, before France's second occupation in 1807. Prior to this, and in no small part due to its strategic geographical location, Corfu had been a part of the Roman Empire (229 BC), Byzantine Empire (337 AD), Normans (1081), Byzantine Empire again (1152) and Venetian Empire (1386). In 1815, Corfu became a British Protectorate, which it remained until formally becoming a part of Greece in 1864. During the 20th Century, the island fell to Italy during 1923, and again during the Second World War, until its liberation in 1944. In such an historic year for the island, the 3rd Symposium therefore considered issues of "Thinking and Re-thinking about Places".

A selection of papers from these three previous events have been published in Volume 10 Number 2 of the *Journal of Place Management and Development* in a special issue on "Responsible Tourism and Place Making".

In 2017, the 4th Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places focused on "Place Making from Various Gazes". The nature of academic enquiry into place management and marketing is inherently interdisciplinary, and the symposium considered the way places are theorised differently in various academic disciplines, and what this means for the practice of managing and marketing places. The inspiration for this particular symposium theme was also informed by the passing, on 18 March 2016, of Professor John Urry, whose research on a



range of subjects relevant to place making, including urban and regional research, and research particularly into the economic, social, environmental and cultural implications of developments in tourism, revolutionised academic research and practitioner insight into *The Tourist Gaze*.

Unique amongst academic conferences, the Symposium offers scholars the opportunity to engage directly with place making, management and marketing issues – as the Symposium includes local businesses, policy makers and other stakeholders eager to implement cutting-edge research that can make a positive difference to Corfu. However, the Symposium is a truly international event, and while we are keen to have impact on the island that is host to our event, the 2017 Symposium presented three keynote speeches from academics and practitioners from three different countries, and attracted almost 50 delegates presenting 35 papers representing 58 authors from 33 organisations in 21 countries. Our furthest delegates travelled from Australia, Thailand and China; we also attracted many delegates not only from Europe but also delegates from Russia, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Morocco and Albania. There was also a good balance between conceptual papers and those related to specific issues in specific places.

Best Paper in the Practitioner category was awarded to Gareth Roberts, from the Institute of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University for his paper “Towards a taxonomy of place brands. A content analysis of Greater Manchester’s place brand architecture”.

Best Paper in the Doctoral candidate category was awarded to Aggelos Panayiotopoulos from the University of Limerick, Ireland, for his paper “Local Perceptions of Mass Tourists: The Tourist Gaze through the Lenses of Power” co-authored with Maurice Patterson, also from the University of Limerick, and Peter Burns from the Institute for Tourism Research at the University of Bedfordshire.

Best Overall Paper was awarded to Gillian Rodríguez from the University of Central Lancashire for her paper on “The Local Consumers’ Gaze Interpreted as Regional Food Brand Essence”.

Some of the key themes that arose during the Symposium surrounded issues of:

- authenticity and place, and this is likely to be an issue that recurs in future events as it has done in the past;
- co-creation and collaboration, between those responsible for managing and marketing places and a place’s stakeholders, and also between different places, also arose in many discussions as it became evident that many places continue to try to implement individual responses to various challenges, whereas it may be more appropriate for them to consider how they could implement similar responses and initiatives recognising that they may be more similar to clusters of other places globally than their practices currently reflect; and
- money, power and politics featured heavily in many of the papers presented at this Symposium, and engaged delegates in interesting and lively discussion not only about how these issues impact upon people and places but also generated some interesting potential solutions for place management and marketing practice.

Delegates at the 4th Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places presented papers from the gazes of their various disciplines, including advertising, agricultural development, architecture, botanic gardens, data science, farming, food and drink, geography, hedonism and luxury, higher education, law, literature, music, place branding, place management, place marketing, sustainability and tourism. As the Symposium continues to become

increasingly interdisciplinary, it is likely that papers and discussions will include a broader range of issues presented from a wider range of disciplines. This is where a key feature will develop in future events, as we consider how different disciplines perceive place, and what that means for theoretical development and impact on place management and marketing practice. We also aim to continue to strengthen the Symposium's links with the local business community in Corfu, and wider through the IPM's networks of place practitioners. Each year we have taken delegates to visit various destinations around the island, including the opportunity to visit local producers of crafts and food and drink products. Once again the Symposium was opened by the Mayor of the Corfu Municipality, Mr Konstantinos Nikolouzos, who is very keen to find ways of engaging delegates to the Symposium in helping address some of the challenges facing the island. This year we also held an open event where local businesses and tourist related organisations could hear short presentations from selected delegates whose research could have a real impact for Corfu even though its initial focus may have been on other places, or be of a conceptual nature. We aim to build on this even more in future years, encouraging engagement with the business community in advance of the 2018 Symposium, and engaging delegates during that event to consider how their work could have more of an impact in practice. The 5th Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places will be held from 16 to 19 April 2018. The theme will be "Changing places: Visions of utopia or dystopia?"

SMART growth, inclusive growth, degrowth, devolution, revitalisation, placemaking, place branding and destination marketing: A list of common place practices or ambitions. But what future do these bring to the towns, cities, regions or nations in which they are adopted? The theme of the 5th Corfu Symposium on Managing and Marketing Places is to explore the utopian or dystopian visions associated with the place practices we study, promote or enact. Whilst we do not expect all authors to provide this reflection themselves, time will be devoted, within the symposium, to collectively discuss and debate the potential impact on places tomorrow from the work we do presently.

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