

Ten years ago, the *Journal of Place Management and Development* set out to bridge the gap between theory and practice and publish high quality research that would help place managers make better places. Over the past 10 years we have seen the practice of place management transform from one that was almost entirely focused upon feel-good factors; marketing, events, hanging baskets and Christmas lights to one which now appreciates that everything that happens in a location - both good and bad - is of relevance to place management. A similar transition can be seen on the pages of the JPMD - especially as we are publishing more articles from authors exploring place management in a variety of different geo-political contexts.

Places are complex, so the JPMD has always been interdisciplinary as the challenges faced by, as well as the opportunities presenting themselves to, our towns and cities do not fit neatly into academic boxes. We are beginning to see the impact of such a diverse but applied journal in the policies and practices of place management around the world.

Last month, editors Dominic Medway and Cathy Parker visited the Higher School of Economics in Moscow and St Petersburg at the request of Dr Kirill Rozhkov, Fellow of the Institute of Place Management. During our trip we were privileged to meet a number of people all making a difference to cities and towns around the Russian Federation\*. The problems they face are considerable and many are very familiar (local economic decline, lack of funding, etc.). However, the major challenge appeared to be changing the *location* of decision-making. It is not easy to encourage participation and decision-making in locations and communities that have been used to decades of central planning and control, even when there is clearly a political will to devolve this.

One month later we were working locally, in Macclesfield, a town just south of Manchester, chairing a public consultation on the future of the town centre at the request of the local Community Interest Company, Make it Macclesfield. One of the major conclusions we took away from the discussion was the appetite from local stakeholders to be involved in decision-making, but how local government structure and culture was inhibiting this type of devolution, even though there are a number of very supportive public servants and Councillors.

In both instances we were able to provide advice and offer a way forward based on the research we have published in this journal. For authors that have had requests from reviewers or editors to make the contribution of their research more explicit for place managers, this is the reason why. The JPMD provides insight and evidence to the Institute of Place Management and our network of hundreds of practitioners and policy makers - and we want your research to make a difference, to help make better places.

Turning to the research in this issue, in *Putting a number on place: A systematic review of place branding influence*, Evan Cleave and Godwin Arku seek to critically review and evaluate attempts to quantify the influence of place branding for urban areas from a



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geographic perspective. In particular, the study reviews how scholars have conceptualized and measured place branding influence. Through a systematic review of seven research databases, 39 articles attempting to quantify place branding influence are identified. These studies are reviewed, and the article information used to explore how place branding research has thus far quantified the influence of place branding practice. The research finds that there is clear compatibility between the place branding and human geography research domains, with potential for place branding influence to be conceptualized through sense-of-place. This has implications for place equity as well as consumer decision-making. The authors suggest that much of the existing research has conceptualized influence through place equity, revealing potential performance indicators for its quantification. The paper provides valuable insight into, and presents potentially useful implications for, place branding policy formulation and implementation.

Marzia Morena, Tommaso Truppi and Maria Del Gatto's paper *Sustainable Tourism and Development: The Model of The Albergo Diffuso*, aims to provide fresh insight into the topicality of the Albergo Diffuso model, more than thirty years since this concept was developed. The characteristics and associated organisational issues of the model are addressed by the authors, who suggest that whilst the model may have been around for some time, it still holds value for contemporary tourism. The research will be of interest for those involved in tourism practice and research, particularly those with an interest in the sustainable development of Italy. The authors suggest that the Italian Government have actually acknowledged the potential of the model by means of some recent initiatives that have been introduced. This paper highlights the continuing value of the Albergo Diffuso model as a tool that can enable researchers to match the unique features of local areas with local development and contemporary tourist trends.

Dustin C Read and Drew Sanderford's *Making Places and Making Tradeoffs: Mixed-Income Housing Development in Practice*, examines the development of the Brightwalk community in Charlotte, North Carolina. The authors explore some of the trade-offs municipalities make when engaging in public-private partnerships designed to support the production of mixed-income housing in urban neighborhoods. The results of a gray literature review, and a series of in-depth interviews conducted with real estate practitioners familiar with the transaction, are presented to examine the impact of market forces on key investment decisions and project outcomes. The research suggests that public-private partnerships formed to support mixed-income housing development can serve as an effective means of revitalizing economically stagnant urban areas and improving the quality of the affordable housing stock. However, they do not always provide members of the development team with an equally strong incentive to satisfy the unique demands of low-income populations. Nor do they ensure they have a seat at the table when development decisions are made.

In *Measuring Urban Competitiveness: Ranking European Large Urban Zones*, Lucía Sáez, Iñaki Perriáñez and Iñaki Heras-Saizarbitoria attempt to identify the main dimensions that determine the ability of cities to compete as locations for business and hubs for investment. In turn, the authors suggest that this can help policy makers to manage and prioritize urban development strategies. A composite indicator is proposed as a weighted aggregate of sub-indicators for three component dimensions (basic, efficiency-related and innovation-related competitiveness). The indicator is used to draw up a ranking of 159 European Large Urban Zones (LUZs) located in 26 EU countries. The findings suggest that the dimensions underlying urban competitiveness - in relation to the location of firms and attracting investment - determine the level of economic development of LUZs. The most competitive cities in the study sample have a high level of economic development, with the innovation

dimension the most significant. This is followed by the efficiency dimension and, to a lesser extent, the basic dimension. The article contributes to extant literature, shedding light on the complex relationships between efficiency-related and innovation-related factors, whilst providing guidance to policy makers concerning maximising urban competitiveness.

*Spatial taste formation as a place marketing tool: The case of live music consumption*, by Alexandros Skandalis, John Byrom and Emma Bannister, explores how spatial taste formation and the interrelationships between place and taste can inform the development of contemporary place marketing and/or place management strategies. The paper draws on previous research conducted within the context of live music consumption and, in particular, within live musical spaces such as festivals and concert halls. The study illustrates how spatial taste formation can inform the development of topographies of taste which focus on the creation of field-specific experiences. It also offers insights for understanding the phenomenological uniqueness of various places and the role of place users and other stakeholders in the creation of place marketing and branding value. The authors elaborate upon the potential usefulness of spatial taste formation for place management and marketing research practice, drawing out implications for future research. The paper advances a holistic and phenomenological understanding of place which illustrates how users' perceptions of place are shaped by their experiences in various places, and by the interplay of these experiences with their individual tastes, and vice versa.

Ian Davison Porter, Diarmaid Lawlor, Neil McInroy, Cathy Parker, Phil Prentice, Leigh Sparks and Gary Warnaby's *The World Towns Framework: A Call to Action*, presents the background to the development of the World Towns' Framework. Developed in June 2016 at the inaugural World Towns Leadership Summit in Scotland, the framework sets out the shared principles for collaboration and action required to strengthen the narrative of towns and urban districts globally. The paper provides an academic underpinning to the four pillars of the agreement; a unique sense of identity and place, economy, leadership and citizenship and environment. The authors articulate a new narrative for towns, neighbourhoods and city districts in responding to contemporary urban challenges, shaping a new urban agenda for these, whilst asserting the need for new alliances and approaches deemed essential for a strong competitive economy. This is the first attempt to develop a framework to shape urban change outside of cities and metropolises, which is more inclusive of towns and smaller places. The article ends with a call to action for practitioners, policymakers and organisations providing support to people in places who want to contribute to the development of the framework and adopt it themselves.

We also have a conference report from the 4<sup>th</sup> Institute of Place Management International Biennial Conference, which this time took 'Inclusive Placemaking' as its theme. The event, held in Manchester in September 2017, is unique in that it brings together academics, practitioners and policy makers. As such, the discussion is inter-disciplinary, nay, holistic in nature, providing a thought-provoking and challenging experience for anyone with an interest in making places better.

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