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Future agendas in urban tourism research: special editorial

Foreword

Dr Tina Šegota (University of Greenwich), IJTC Theme Editor of quality for life in tourism cities

Academic researchers were provided with an additional forum to exchange knowledge, research and agendas on the critical study of urban tourism and tourism cities with the emergence of the International Journal of Tourism Cities in 2015. Since then, the Journal has been recognised for its outstanding contribution to urban tourism research by numerous scholars. This recognition was embodied in prestigious academic abstracting and indexing, such as achieving the Emerging Sources Citation Index, and Scopus and SJR indices of above 0.5.

International Journal of Tourism Cities also welcomed numerous international scholars to its editorial board, of which some also serve as the theme editors. Theme editors were invited to provide their insights on future research agendas in urban tourism research. With this gesture, the journal wishes to mark the celebration of the fifth volume in the fifth year of publishing and many abovementioned recognitions, as well as acknowledging the valuable time and effort of many scholars dedicated to its recent success.

Therefore, this special editorial serves as a roadmap for future research on the opportunities and challenges for urban tourism. It initially touches upon more recent technological advancements and their impact on tourism in cities, calling for a better understanding of the concept of smartness and highlighting the importance of social media. Furthermore, sustainability, quality of life, and tourism planning and development have been heavily challenged by sharing economy and tourists’ quest for unique experiences enabled by new technologies. Several important questions and perspectives have been outlined – from responsible tourism to ethnoscapes, to acknowledgement that urban tourism not only impacts the quality of life of local residents but also its visitors. Lessons learnt from crises may bring new opportunities for managing urban tourism, just as in the case of post-communist countries. However, with the issue of terrorism at every corner of the world, new research on crisis management is anticipated. Looking further down the line of challenges for urban tourism, tourists’ behaviour has dynamically changed with the help of new technologies. So, has the behaviour of business travellers, for whom we need a better understanding of their experiences of being invited, to attend, to post-travel behaviour in relation to business events. Moreover, there is a need for a better understanding of special interest tourism and its impact on tourism management, supply and demand business perspectives and host community. Similarly, new research agendas should also focus on the conservation of nature and its importance for city tourism.

In conclusion, the special editorial brings a fresh perspective on new visual research methodology that offers numerous possibilities for research by elicitation of techniques and researcher participant-produced visuals.

eTourism and on how to address the smart city complexity by Professor Marianna Sigala (University of South Australia), IJTC Theme Editor for eTourism

There is no dispute that city tourism will continue to grow. Many tourism cities are also threatening to become from currently big to megacities faced with problems of the overloaded

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and insufficient carrying capacity of resources and infrastructure. Livability, sustainability, quality of life and (psychological, physical, socio-cultural and mental) well-being of tourists but also residents, security and safety, avoidance of commercialisation/disneyfication of cultural resources and spaces are only some of the top issues that many tourism cities already need to address. Nowadays, to achieve that, one does not have to work harder but smarter. Indeed, everything becomes smarter: smart citizens, smart tourists, smart destinations, smart tourism attractions, smart cars, smart houses, [...] smart everything. In China alone, the government’s priority is to have 40 smart cities by 2020. It seems that the socio-technological factors that have contributed to the increase of tourism flows and inhabitants into cities can be used and are currently used to turn the issues around. One might call this strategy against overtourism and overpopulation “fight them with their own weapons”.

Technological advances and their implications (social media, IoT, sharing economy/peer-to-peer platforms, e.g. Uber, Airbnb, the EasyJet /low-cost phenomenon in all sectors such as air carriers, accommodation), the increased people’s mobilities (i.e. digital nomads) are indeed responsible for the “Instagram” popularity and the overflow of tourists in numerous cities like Barcelona, Amsterdam, even in remote places like Hobart (Tasmania) whereby locals are displaced and/or complain about lack of housing, over-priced accommodation, conversion of residential areas into tourism hotspots. Simultaneously, many cities all over the globe have also been receiving more and more domestic and overseas immigrants and refugees, as a result, overseas political instability or the sought of domestic rural people seeking a better modern city life.

But at the same time, technological advances are being used and developed to make (tourism) cities more livable and sustainable: smart energy solutions manage waste and resources like water and electricity; big data (from Uber, social media, etc.) inform urban planners on how to optimise public transportation systems and destination marketers to divert tourists off route and to less “Instagrammed” popular hot spots; smart governance empowers citizens and tourists to raise their voice and participate in decision-making about their city lives and experiences; peer-to-peer platforms democratise access to the “capitalist” economy and enable homelesly, disadvantaged groups, refugees to become micro-entrepreneurs (e.g. micro-restaurants, micro-tourist guides) in order to raise income, promote their “own culture”, avoid being ghettoised and so, become integrated within, be appreciated and understood by the local city communities; drones, artificial intelligence, robotics and teleporting will reduce transportation needs and problems (such as pollution and security) through urban delivery, monitoring, data collection. But then, all these new technologies raise new issues and dilemmas such as: digital “discrimination” (why black Uber drivers and Airbnb hosts are less selected and lower paid?); privacy, ownership and security of big data; ethical and legal issues of drones and driverless cars “programmed” to kill pedestrians over the passengers (who can decide about the value of the life of each individual, what the law says about the responsibility of programmers and machine learning devices, and what are the ethical issues of placing a value next to various people’s lives?).

Overall, it seems that in this smart tourism cities world things become more complex and perplex to understand and manage. We are required to update and redefine legislation, cultural value systems, ethical values and lifestyles (what do we mean by micro-entrepreneur or digital nomad) now, but without currently knowing what the applications and implications of all these new socio-technological changes and innovations are and could be.

Social media and the city: mediated gazes and digital traces by Professor Ulrike Gretzel (University of Southern California), IJTC Theme Editor for social media in city tourism marketing

Månsson (2011) argues that tourism spaces are becoming increasingly mediatized, with ordinary travellers and residents contributing to this phenomenon by sharing their experiences through an ever-growing array of social media applications. Jansson (2007) draws attention to the “close relationship between spatial and communicative practice” (p. 10) in the context of tourism and suggests that new media produce a different kind of space and a different kind of tourism.
by affecting the way tourists script, navigate and represent their tourism experiences. This is particularly the case for cities because the communicative density and heightened levels of connectivity in urban spaces facilitate social media use in critical ways (Magasic and Gretzel, 2017).

Social media play several important roles in tourism (Gretzel, 2018) and specifically in urban tourism. Social media use fuels our desire to travel because it creates vacation envy through exposure to others’ enticing social media posts. Social media technologies are also incredibly “needy” and persuade us to constantly post to please our social media audiences (Kozinet et al., 2016). They demand that we post extraordinary, share-worthy contents and tourist gazes are increasingly fixated on finding such experiences at tourist destinations (Dinhоп and Gretzel, 2016). Cities with their many walls, buildings, signs, art displays, public spaces, hidden alleyways, stairs, bridges, lights, shops, cafés, libraries, etc. offer an unlimited supply of objects and landscapes that can be framed in interesting ways for social media sharing.

Social media further inspire us to experience cities beyond the core tourism attractions by exposing us to curated lists of places that are Instagrammable or “trendy with the locals”. Based on the expanding universe of reviews, we can immediately judge whether these locales meet our preferences and unique needs. And we do no longer have to experience these places alone as social media afford new levels of social connectivity (Munar et al., 2013). Our urban adventures can be instantaneously shared via snaps or live videos with friends and family staying at the hotel or at home, with broader social media audiences or with tourism providers. At the same time, social media allow us to connect with other tourists or with locals by showing us who is near and interested/interesting. Cities, more so than any other destination type, deliver the necessary social density and diversity to foster such connections. Moreover, social media allow us to connect with our future cosmopolitan selves who can relive our city trips when social media “memories” pop up on our screens.

Importantly, social media also provide us with new means to study these urban tourism experiences. They supply large quantities of geo-located digital traces of city tourists that can be quantitatively analysed to understand how urban spaces are navigated (Stienmetz, 2018). At the same time, they provide extremely rich experiential accounts of city tourism in a textual or visual form that can be scrutinised using netnographic techniques (Woodside et al., 2007). Seeing city tourism at this nexus of geographic and communicative practice, as suggested by Jansson (2007), therefore opens up many avenues to understanding tourism in urban environments that have yet to be explored by tourism researchers.

The diversity of approaches to sustainability in tourism cities: initiating new research on dynamic and adaptive responses by Dr Jonathon Day (Purdue University), IJTC Theme Editor for sustainable tourism

While much of the conversation about sustainable tourism to date seems to focus on small-scale rural locations, the big story in the years to come is sustainable tourism in cities. In 2000, at the dawn of the new century, the Mohonk agreement recognised that sustainable tourism was a set of principles that can be applied to all tourism operations – rural and urban. In the intervening years, the growth of cities and the continuing trends for urbanisation have ensured that greater attention must be placed on the sustainability of urban tourism. Fortunately, the trend has begun, and greater attention is being paid to sustainability in urban destinations (Lu and Nepal, 2009). Nevertheless, as we move into 2020, the opportunity – and need for – research on sustainability in tourism cities is great.

The challenges of understanding sustainable tourism in cities are significant. Tourism is a complex, adaptive system (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2005; Morrison et al., 2018), and this is never more evident than in urban tourism. In each city, a wide range of companies contribute to the provision of tourism services. In addition, tourism is dependent on services provided by organisations that do not even consider themselves part of the tourism system. Utilities providing energy, water, waste disposal and transportation services all serving the community and tourists and each organisation impacting the sustainability of the tourism in cities. Even at the individual level, the behaviour of each traveller visiting the city has the potential to either contribute positively...
or negatively to the city during their visit. Research on sustainable tourism in cities must be conducted examining the city as a system, as well as the contributions of organisations within the system and individual behaviour.

Tourism researchers must also recognise the tourism system is dynamic and adaptive (Day, 2016). Tourism organisations are both initiating changes and responding to them. In 2008, few could predict the impacts of Airbnb on tourism in cities. Today, cities continue to grapple with changes in disruptive technology. New forms of transportation are changing the streets and sidewalks of tourism cities. From the need to provide charging for electric vehicles, to new policies responding to the rapid rise of shared bikes and electric scooters, urban centres that host tourism must respond to the changing landscape. The opportunity to generate a greater understanding of these processes through longitudinal studies is great.

The scope of enquiry is great. Not only must we gain a greater understanding of what must be done, but how it will be done. The diversity of approaches to sustainability is exciting and offers a great opportunity for research. Cities are proving to be the laboratories for new policies and practices, often leading the way in new practices that tourism organisations must adopt. Smart tourism is improving the information available on which to build sustainability plans. Still there is work to be done in understanding what works most effectively. And while much sustainability research has addressed what must be done to achieve greater sustainability in cities, less has been done on how we achieve these goals. Sustainability requires collaboration and cooperation between a variety of actors within the destination system, and it requires tourists and suppliers working together to achieve these goals.

Tourism researchers are making progress on many of these issues. As we address the challenges in our complex, ever-changing cities, we must be ready to embrace new perspectives and approaches. The challenge of sustainability in tourism cities encourages a multidisciplinary approach. Disciplines as varied as environmental engineering and sociology, consumer behaviour and town planning, hydrology and marketing, to name just a few, must all contribute to our growing understanding of the issues associated with urban sustainability and tourism.

The stakes have never been higher. While tourism has the potential to contribute to the achievement of sustainability goals, it may also contribute to many of the challenges facing the world. Environmental issues, economic development and social justice issues are evident across the tourism system – in cities that play host to many of the world’s tourists. Indeed, beyond the general issues of sustainability in tourism, tourism cities are addressing new challenges including visitor management and overtourism.

For residents or for tourists? The quality of life nexus in tourism cities by Dr Tina Šegota (University of Greenwich), IJTC Theme Editor of quality for life in tourism cities

In the light of recent residents’ protests in Barcelona, Mallorca and Venice, to name a few, it is fair to conclude that the quality of life in tourism cities has been heavily challenged by increasing numbers of visitors and accompanying perceived negative impacts of tourism. Hence, the new buzzwords “overtourism”, “overcrowding”, “anti-tourism” and “tourism-phobia” were introduced across academic journals and other newspapers, igniting a new debate that may have rather existed for almost half of century. This is because the reasons for residents’ mobilisation against tourism and governments’ actions to mitigate its negative impacts are not fully understood by the literature. Regardless of the resident attitudes towards tourism being one of the most extensively researched fields, dating back over more than 50 years, it failed to predict a tipping point for such extreme events. Note that many criticise the research filed as being unilateral and quantitative (in its own right), and that as such it failed to appreciate that perceived impacts or reactions to tourism are not singular or absolute (Deery et al., 2012; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014; Garcia et al., 2015; McKercher et al., 2015; Šegota et al., 2017).

Quality of life in tourism cities has been further challenged by the mediated gaze supported by social media and tourists’ constant search for new, exciting and authentic experiences. In the
constant battle for the economic development and growth originating from tourist visitations, some cities even went great lengths to attract visitors by immersing their identity to the identity liked by (potential) visitors. One such example is the city of Dubrovnik, a UNESCO Heritage Site since 1979, which has become a fantasyland for the Game of Thrones fans (Šegota, 2018a). The change of the city’s identity has been greatly encouraged by the work of Croatian DMO in promoting the city as King’s landing on social media, which Šegota (2018b) describes as unintentional practices gone “great”. However, the real issue is whether Dubrovnik or any other filming destination can continue to sustain itself as a significant heritage destination. Since “new Dubrovnik” has been increasingly profiled and promoted as King’s Landing, the city is now at risk of acquiring the image of a destination for film enthusiasts that only lasts a decade. That will, undeniably, result in fewer visitations over years to come as the outcome of decreased popularity of the film. However, it is not known and well-worth exploring, to what extent will the economic benefits from popular tourism decrease, leaving local residents with, on one hand, constant struggle for improving the sense of material well-being, and, on the other hand, challenges of city’s identity with the effect to the sense of community well-being.

Importantly, the quality of life in tourism cities does not only apply to local residents but also to tourists that spend a considerable amount of time in cities. Thus, the quality of life has to be examined not only from the aspect of residents’ well-being but also from tourists’ well-being (Uysal et al., 2012). It was noted that a fully functioning tourism system should be a prerequisite for understanding and identifying both tangible and intangible benefits and costs of tourism (Uysal et al., 2012). Seeing urban tourism as an enabler of attaining a set of desired quality of life goals for residents and tourists while maintaining sustainable tourism system at a competitive edge will open many new opportunities for research on allocating limited resources and developing appropriate tourism development and destination marketing strategies.

Informing tourism policy and development with responsible tourism and ethnoscapes by Dr Jithendran Kokkranikal (University of Greenwich), IJTC Theme Editor for tourism planning and development

Cities are no longer seen as mere ports of entry or transit points but have emerged as substantial tourist destinations that offer a wide range of tourist attractions and activities (Postma et al., 2018). Tourists visit cities for a variety of reasons, ranging from leisure to business and are a source of significant economic benefits. While being a source of dynamism and vitality, tourism has fast been becoming another source of pressure on the economy, infrastructure, society and environment to many cities. A number of cities have seen anti-tourism movements protesting against the disruption tourism has created to their lives (Seraphin et al., 2018). The complexities and challenges of city tourism, as a source of economic benefits and negative externalities, make it a major agenda for policymakers and planners. The implications to tourism policy and planning in cities are tremendous, so are the opportunities for tourism research in these areas.

Sustainability implications of city tourism have been and will continue to be a major research area, within which there is a need for further investigations on themes such as the circular economy and responsible tourism, both of which have significant policy and planning implications. Overtourism has emerged as a major issue in a number of city destinations, and a number of cities have seen anti-tourism protest movements (Seraphin et al., 2018). Population pressure on cities, which could be exacerbated by increasing tourist numbers necessitates further research on carrying capacity of urban destinations within the context of constantly evolving mobility patterns facilitated by technological advancements.

Most of the major city destinations have ethnoscapes (Razak, 2007) making them a kaleidoscope of eclectic cultural spaces, including the diaspora. Ethnoscapes and diaspora tourism thus form part of the policy research agenda for city tourism. Advancements in information and communication technologies have contributed to the emergence of the shared economy, a manifestation which in the accommodation sector (i.e. Airbnb) is said to have exacerbated urban inequality and turning many residential districts in the cities into tourist quarters.
Lessons learnt and future challenges from tourism planning in post-communist countries by Assoc. Professor Melanie K. Smith (Budapest Metropolitan University, The Hungarian Academy of Sciences and University of Tartu), IJTC Theme Editor for cultural tourism and tourism in post-communist countries

The trajectories of post-socialist cities have not been uniform, nor should they be treated monolithically (Tsenkova, 2012; Berki, 2014; Banaszkiewicz et al., 2017). On the other hand, many post-socialist cities share a common history including the challenges of transition. Sýkora (2009) defined the post-socialist city as a temporarily existing, transitional city which adapted to new political and economic conditions in the transformation from communism to capitalism. This includes the development of tourism, which was limited to a great extent before 1989. Several major themes could be said to have emerged within the urban tourism research arena since 1989, including interpretation of the socialist past and dissonant heritage; national and city identity building and branding; cultural and creative industry developments; the role of tourism in urban rehabilitation and gentrification; the night-time economy; and (more recently) “overtourism”.

During the early years after the fall of Communism, the question of national identity construction, image and brand building became important (Andrusz, 2004), an area within which tourism could play a major role. While international tourists were fascinated by the socialist heritage, post-socialist countries and especially their capital cities were keener to present a new identity to the world (Smith and Puczkó, 2010a). Socialist heritage often became dissonant, so street and square names were changed and the statues of communist leaders were removed or placed in remote statue parks or museums. Instead, of focusing on socialism, new narratives of place identity often invoked an idealised pre-socialist “Golden Age” which was often the late nineteenth century (Young and Light, 2006). Many post-socialist cities are inherently cultural and historic and therefore have always promoted their heritage, museums and galleries (Hughes and Allen, 2005; Smith and Puczkó, 2012). Richards (2001) noted that there was a fall in the local consumption of “high” culture in many post-socialist countries after 1989, mainly due to a lack of state subsidy and declining incomes. Thus, foreign tourism could provide the boost that was needed for many flagging cultural attractions.

Nevertheless, many countries suffered from a total lack of image (Olins, 2004; Smith and Puczkó, 2010b) and it was often a question of putting themselves on the European and international tourism map. Hall (2004) noted that many visitors harboured images of regional instability, poor service, infrastructure and the low quality of public facilities. However, tourism grew rapidly in the 2000s (Cudny, 2012), in a “desire to make up for lost time” (Banaszkiewicz et al., 2017, p. 113). This was further accelerated by EU accession for many post-socialist countries in 2004, after which the advent of budget airlines changed the landscape of tourism quite considerably. By this time, first-time “curiosity” visitor numbers were decreasing (Rátz, 2004), but those interested in enjoying the night-time economy (NTE) and availings themselves of cheap alcohol was increasing. Relatively undesirable forms of tourism emerged in cities like Prague, Krakow and Tallinn, such as “stag and hen” party drinking weekends (Iwanicki et al., 2016). Research has started to show that regardless of past developments, post-socialist cities are suffering similar effects of NTE and overtourism to western cities, accompanied by laissez-faire attitudes to urban and tourism planning, inconsistent and inadequate legal and regulatory frameworks, and inherent corruption (Tsenkova, 2012; Pivoval and Sládek, 2017; Smith et al., 2018).

Future research might attempt to examine the inextricable connection between politics and tourism, especially with regard to changing identity and image construction, and the factors that determined the rapidly changing tourism landscapes from pre- and post-socialist heritage and cultural tourism to NTE-related “overtourism”.

Looking beyond the negative: crises in tourism cities as a tool for learning and positive change by Assoc. Professor Joan C. Henderson (Nanyang Technological University), IJTC Theme Editor for tourism crisis management for cities

Crises take many forms and are an inescapable aspect of life. In terms of spatial scope, they range from the local to global and can strike at a city level with ramifications for its tourism. National and international crises are often shared by cities where adverse effects may
be intensified. Developments in economic, political, socio-cultural and environmental domains separately and sometimes in combination can precipitate crises within an urban context in ways demonstrated by recent occurrences around the world. Major cities and especially capitals are places where financial and political power is concentrated, making them sites for expressions of internal dissent which can disrupt tourism. Terrorists too are attracted to cities as targets for their attacks because of population densities, capacity for damage and media interest. While tourism crises can be triggered by external factors beyond the control of the industry, they can be induced or exacerbated by industry weaknesses. The popularity of many cities can itself be a source of the crisis, illustrated by mounting resident opposition to what has been labelled “overtourism”.

City destinations affected by crises face negative publicity, a problem which is aggravated in the era of modern information communication technologies, raising questions about the safety of visitors alongside any tourism industry investment. There are risks that reputations and images will be tamished, although this depends on the city and nature and duration of the crisis together with the manner in which it is handled by civic authorities and businesses. Tourism has proved its resilience in the past and crisis-stricken destinations have been seen to recover quickly. Recovery and restoration of the status quo, or at least a state of near normality, is aided in the case of larger cities by their size and multi-functionality as centres of business and other types of travel in which there is less discretion than that for leisure purposes.

Nevertheless, anticipating and preparing for tourism crises are key responsibilities of metropolitan governments and the commercial sector. Looking ahead, cities confront numerous challenges with the potential to evolve into a situation of crisis which impacts on both domestic and international tourist arrivals. Prospective crises span a spectrum from a single incident to a chronic condition and encompass various sorts such as outbreaks of infectious disease, natural disasters, political and social unrest and financial shocks. Geographical location and stage of economic development play a part in vulnerability to crises and capacity to respond effectively with possible contrasts within and amongst regions worldwide. Crises also represent opportunities for learning and positive change which should not be overlooked.

It is therefore instructive to examine city experiences of crises globally with a view to better understand causes and catalysts, evolutionary processes, underlying dynamics and outcomes. Analyses can additionally yield useful insights into good practice regarding tourism crisis planning and management on the part of public and private agencies. There is an appreciation of the significance of urban tourism research generally and the need for further studies (Edwards et al., 2008; Ashworth and Page, 2011; Pearce and Pearce, 2017). Encouraging work related to issues of crises and dissemination of results is, therefore, an important task for the journal which is of relevance to both academics and practitioners.

On terrorism and its challenges to freedom, mobility and way of life by Asst. Professor Claudia Seabra (University of Coimbra), IJTC Theme Editor for terrorism in tourism cities

Terrorism is becoming frighteningly frequent. Recently, several countries have been targeted by terrorist attacks that are shaking important foundations upon which our identity is based: freedom, mobility, culture fruition and a happy way of life. The recent terrorist events mainly targeting important tourist sites and cities, beaches, museums, resorts, airports, train and subway stations, restaurants, discos, festivals, prove the high value of tourists as terrorist targets.

Too many attacks targeted people who just wanted to be happy and have fun, working, living and travelling freely around the world [...].

These events marked the beginning of a new unsafety environment. The positions are radicalised; the discourses are hard and proactive. Many countries are preparing measures to strengthen security modifying its legislation to prevent further attacks especially in limiting the entries and visas. Some voices arise, asking for changes to the free movement of people especially in border controls limiting travelling. How do these attacks on freedom, mobility and way of life, condemned by all, manage to create, in turn, limitations to those same freedoms and way of life? There is a constant state of alertness that forces us to be in a constant state of discomfort that is
almost comfortable. In turn, terrorism is having a strong impact on travel patterns. Tourists are avoiding destinations that experienced terrorist attacks changing the geography of travel. This reality is bringing to destinations and tourism firms new challenges to manage the damages caused by this unsafety environment. This daily contact with terrorism makes it strangely close and almost tolerable. It is urgent to understand this phenomenon. Hence, safety is one of the most fundamental conditions granted to human beings, it is an anthropological need and a vital part of the human condition. New research agendas should help to understand the real effects of terrorism on the individuals’ life, to address both the material and the psychological cost of terrorism in the people’s behaviour, namely in what regards to peoples’ movement and travel.

Resetting and re-exploring the foundations of tourists’ behaviour in tourism cities by Professor Philip Pearce (James Cook University), IJTC Theme Editor for tourist behaviour in cities

There are many themes about tourist behaviour which can be extended and revisited in future research about tourism cities. Four topics can be highlighted – wayfinding, dealing with others, appraising satisfaction and storytelling. They all stand out as areas of particular interest. The need to refresh older studies exists because technology has reshaped some of what tourists have to do to cope with city visits. Further, new numbers and waves of tourist popularity in many cities present challenges which are unlike those seen in twentieth century foundation studies. These changes demand that researchers build and regenerate what we know for the coming decade.

Wayfinding studies were built on tourists use of hand-held maps and followed the pioneering work of Lynch (1960). These early studies provided a coding system and interesting ideas about how to design maps for tourists. They partly answered questions about why men and women approach the task of mapping the city differently and avoid getting lost (not always successfully). With mobile phones, satellite technology and the use of advisory directional aids, the support systems for finding the way in a city are markedly different. Nevertheless, how individuals negotiate, use and argue over the right turns to take or the most desirable option to visit still matter and are worth studying – both for the harmony of the travel party and for the businesses seeking to attract their customers.

Dealing with others in city tourism has become the hot topic of this decade. Tourists have to deal with the problem of overtourism, at least for the duration of their visit. Local citizens, of course, have to deal with the problem over several months, and sometimes for almost twelve months of the year. Our models of tourist-tourist and tourist-local contact were built in less busy times (cf. Amir, 1969; Hottola, 2004). The extent to which tourists annoy one another and frustrate the local community may have to be reconceptualised with new social representations of the problem of crowding and stresses on human and physical resources. Significant shifts in how city tourist experiences are redesigned to account for the large volumes of people represents a conceptually interesting challenge with important applied consequences.

Satisfaction, like the other foundation concepts considered here, was initially emphasised in consumer studies in the 1950s. By the time the Rolling Stones sang about the topic in the 1960s, it was an entrenched dependent variable in business and marketing. As shifts in the economy developed towards the end of the decade, the foundation idea that satisfaction was all that mattered in evaluating tourist behaviour was wearing thin; other outcomes such as learning, self-development, personal growth, and having a low impact started to appeal as alternative measures of the worth of the holiday. In looking forward, the need to embrace a wider range of outcomes to assess the meaning of city trips is now on the agenda of contemporary researchers and links to motivation theories, such as my own travel career pattern (Pearce, 2005, 2011), may suggest more factors to consider when reviewing the benefits of a city holiday.

Telling one’s travel story has also changed over the last 50 years. When tourism studies started to blossom, there were not so many travellers and certainly relaying messages about international and domestic holidays was a snail mail process. On return to one’s home community, the full events of the holiday and its sights and sounds were relayed to audiences for the first time. Now in the social media world, and with the greater numbers of experienced travellers, it is much harder for the returning tourist to have something novel to say. Many struggle to avoid repeating the
themes already broadcast through Facebook, WeChat or Twitter. In essence, tourists have to work harder to exploit social status and personal gain once easily acquired by travelling to a city. There is research to be done, therefore, on what are the best city tourism stories, and importantly, how can an understanding of these stories translate into marketing and business opportunities for destination marketers.

City tourism has deep roots in many cultures and societies. Pathways to study aspects of tourists’ behaviour were set when tourism flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. It is desirable now to reset and re-explore some of these foundation directions for the next decade.

Research into business tourism: past, present and future by Dr Rob Davidson (MICE Knowledge and University of Greenwich), IJTC Theme Editor for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions

A significant proportion of the visitors to cities around the world are business tourists – people attending meetings, conferences, trade shows and other types of events connected with their employment or economic activity. This form of tourism brings a range of benefits to cities, principally economic, as the daily expenditure of business tourists is generally much higher than that of leisure visitors. For example, in 2017 the daily expenditure of international business visitors to Australian cities was almost double that of holiday visitors to those destinations in the same year. In addition, for most cities, business tourism is far less seasonally concentrated than leisure tourism, decreasing in volume only at holiday periods and weekends.

In recognition of business tourism’s potential to create additional profits for local hospitality businesses and employment for their citizens, a growing number of cities around the world have developed their infrastructure for this segment of the tourist market, constructing conference centres and exhibition halls in which business events may be held. The private sector has responded in a similar manner, with the opening of new convention hotels in destinations worldwide. This physical infrastructure has been widely complemented by the building of a human infrastructure for business tourism, comprising Convention Bureaux and other destination marketing organisations with the explicit role of attracting large-scale business events to their cities.

Although research into business tourism often appears to pale into significance by comparison with the volume of research into leisure tourism, there has been a recent increase in both the quantity and quality of academic research focusing on this topic. But this growth has been slow in coming. In one of the first reviews of academic research into business events, Yoo and Weber (2005) declared that, despite strong growth in flows of global business tourism over the previous quarter century, it remained under-represented in tourism scholarship as a whole. Five years later, Stetic and Simicevic (2010) still considered that business tourism had not attracted the attention of a number of researchers that was commensurate with its economic importance. But Mair’s (2012) review of the academic business tourism literature from 2000–2009 suggested that interest in this form of tourism was increasing, with researchers focusing largely upon the economic impact of business tourism and the site selection process of conference organisers. Her review identified further areas which have been the focus of considerable research efforts in the period 2000–2009. These include the evaluation of satisfaction by meeting planners, the role of destination image in conference attendance and the decision-making process of conference attendees. But perhaps the most valuable contribution of Mair’s review was her highlighting of important research gaps. She identified these as the social and environmental impacts of business events; climate change and events; incentive travel; and qualitative research (into, for example, the meanings that individuals attach to business events, or about their experience of attending a business event).

It is perhaps the last of these that offer the greatest potential for providing useful insights into the crucial demand-side factors in the business tourism market, as opposed to the more quantitative supply-side research that has dominated this field of enquiry until recently. We need to achieve a much better understanding of business tourists’ experience of visiting our cities and their journeys through those experiences, from the initial invitation to attend a business event to departing from
the destination when that event ends. For example, we need a greater understanding of topics such as: What role does destination image play in the potential business tourist’s decision of whether or not to accept the invitation? How does the experience of business tourists differ from that of leisure visitors to cities? What are the factors that come into play in the business tourist’s decision on whether or not to extend their business trip for leisure purposes by spending a few extra days in the city? These, I believe, will be among the themes that will increasingly attract the interest of researchers over the next few years.

The need for different approaches to understanding special interest tourism in the urban context by Professor Cina Van Zyl (University of South Africa), IJTC Theme Editor for special interest tourism

Tourism, along with other key pillars, constitutes a central component in the economy, social life and the geography of many cities in the world and is thus a key element in urban development policies. Urban tourism can represent a driving force in the development of many cities and countries; tourism is intrinsically linked to how a city develops itself and provides more and better living conditions to its residents and visitors (UNWTO, 2018a). This is more particularly valid for Special Interest Tourism (hereinafter SIT).

The developments during the current decade point out a shift of tourism in focus towards innovation and experiences, and tourists’ demand for diverse and immediate experiences in cities (UNWTO, 2018b). The various forms of SIT – heritage, cultural, events, culinary/gastronomic, etc. – constitute, in our humble opinion, the mainstream of these experiences. This context involves an imperative to improve our understanding and knowledge of the various factors influencing tourism in cities and the related challenges.

A better understanding is needed, and this is the role of academic research. Researchers should aim at exploring and gaining insights on the various issues of the topic of SIT in the urban context and settings. Academic research – conceptual approaches and empirical studies – should investigate the issues and aspects related to SIT from the perspective of different disciplines, i.e. psychology, anthropology, sociology, economy, marketing and management. Some suggestions for future research, classified into four perspectives or streams, are formulated below.

On management in tourism cities: understand and manage visitor growth and emerging challenges; visitor management challenges in urban contexts; adequate strategies and actions plans to manage tourism in urban destinations to the benefit of visitors and residents alike; ensure sustainable policies and practices that minimise adverse effects of tourism on the use of natural resources, infrastructure, mobility and congestion, as well as its socio-cultural impact; appropriate governance models to address the challenges facing urban tourism; collaboration and cooperation approaches in fulfilling tourism’s potential (based on stakeholder theory); approaches and strategies to build shared responsibility amongst stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in urban tourism for sustainable development.

On-demand/tourist consumers: the antecedents/motivations for and the influencing factors of consumers of SIT; the encounter between hosts and guests and their interaction in cities; the exchange value consumption in psychological and anthropological terms; creating innovative experiences, experiences design and development; the factors influencing the consumers’ perceived value and satisfaction of experiential services (assessment); comparative approach and investigation to conventional forms of tourism and Millennials vs Generation Z (similarities and differences).

On supply and business perspective: interesting avenues for future research include issues such as the impact and contribution of SIT to entrepreneurship; from marketing management perspective the business models of SIT (critical success factors as well as their marketing strategies); the strategies adopted and implemented by businesses in providing high quality experiences as well as quality of tourists’ experiences determined by sustainability, accessibility, connectivity and infrastructure.

On hosting community/urban area: academic research should explore the perceptions of local populations and their level of satisfaction, analysis of residents’ perceptions towards SIT in cities;
the effects of SIT on cities and local populations such as the perceptions of residents and the conflicts among different stakeholders; the economic effects/impact on hosting cities (local economy); as well as the contribution of SIT in job creation and employment by local tourism businesses; (and strategies and approaches in involving all stakeholders, bringing residents and visitors together and adopting careful planning which respects the limits of capacity and the specificities of each urban destination.

Conservation of “nature in the city” and its importance for city tourism by Assoc. Professor David Newsome (Murdoch University), IJTC Theme Editor for ecotourism and liveable cities and James Hardcastle (International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, Switzerland)

Natural vegetation, greenspace comprising parks, water features and native trees, and associated wildlife (particularly birds) are increasingly important as recreational resources for urban people who are in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles and hobbies, and for those who are promoting green aspects of city tourism. “Nature in the city” and the emerging importance of natural areas in “city liveability” was raised in the first issue of the International Journal of Tourism Cities (Jones and Newsome, 2015). In recent years, the importance of nature in cities has been highlighted according to the health benefits for resident populations (Bratman et al., 2012; Shanahan et al., 2015), social and psychological benefits (Gladwell et al., 2013) and in regard to the conservation of urban nature (Müller and Werner, 2010). However, as posited by Jones and Newsome (2015), emphasising the importance of natural areas in urban environments, in regard to city liveability and tourism potential, still requires further attention and recognition. We believe that the next phase in exploring the context of nature in the city is in regard to acknowledging and extending the views forwarded by recent research (Dallimer et al., 2012; Keniger et al., 2013; Taylor and Hochuli, 2015) and setting this in the context of internationally recognised standards and criteria for the conservation of important natural and cultural values, such as the IUCN Green List (IUCN, 2018; Wells et al., 2016).

Although many cities feature environmental highlights a few offer natural values as part of a “top ten” list of tourist attractions. A brief trip advisor search for some representatives of the world’s most populous cities, “city proper” shows that very few of them feature even one “natural” area or attraction within the top 10 things to do within or nearby city limits yet, at the same time, they collectively include more than 175m people. For example, cities such as London, Tokyo, Beijing and Istanbul receive millions of visitors per year. Providing nature-based tourism and recreational experiences within cities have incredible health, education and well-being benefits for people and communities and urban societies alike.

In addition, providing local natural attractions can help reduce the “export” of tourists seeking experiences in other places, provide benefits for locals and add value for travellers who are interested in reducing their global carbon footprint from tourism (McKercher et al., 2010; Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014).

In addition, urban protected areas are generally viewed as a low priority for biodiversity conservation (Watson et al., 2014), and subsequently, do not yet receive the attention and support of some international nature conservation groups. Yet such natural areas can help to foster city liveability and serve as tourist attractions in their own right (Jones and Newsome, 2015). However, the situation is changing. For example, the IUCN maintains an urban protected areas specialist group within the World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN resolutions call for more focus on “healthy parks, healthy people” and emphasise the role of protected areas in providing ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction. Moreover, ecosystem services such as clean air and water are increasingly recognised to play a vital role in adaptation to climate change in and around cities. There is also a World Bank-led programme on resilient cities and campaigns to foster greener cities, such as the “London National Park” campaign (London National Park City, n.d.).

Protected areas in cities such as areas with a defined nature conservation value, i.e. species, habitat, ecosystem services, biodiversity and educational/cultural values linked to nature, are increasingly being recognised as important for conservation. In some cases, “natural areas” in cities are being restored and actively managed, or even created (Ikin et al., 2015; Simpson and Newsome, 2017).
Moreover, it is important to appreciate that the collective success of conserved areas in cities depends on an overall plan and integration at the landscape scale (Antognelli and Vizzari, 2017). IUCN’s new Green List sustainability standard (IUCN, 2018) could help frame success for urban conservation areas and provide an incentive for dedicated investment into master-planning, and in achieving and maintaining good performance at sites within cities and across clusters of “sites” sharing similar values.

Research opportunities include the development of standard indicators for the conservation of nature in cities, a specific focus for indicators on visitation, education, access and equity and on good governance and management that helps expand and connect natural values across a cityscape and landscape. In this regard, IUCN Green List expert evaluators include urban experts. Managers of natural sites in cities could be encouraged to jointly apply for the IUCN Green List where they share natural values, or where conservation outcomes are dependent on collective performance and good management. Such international standards will foster urban tourism and additionally lead to city reserves and other green spaces becoming features of city tourism to be valued and marketed in their own right. Such activities are likely to further enhance the tourism value of existing nature spaces in cities such as Xi Xi Wetland, Hangzhou, China; Son Tra Peninsular in Da Nang, Vietnam; Kings Park in Perth, Australia and Central Park in New York, USA.

In conclusion: opening new research avenues with visual research methodologies by Dr Tijana Rakic (University of Brighton), IJTC Theme Editor for visual research methodologies

Although visual methodologies are still on the methodological margins of tourism studies (Rakic and Chambers, 2012a), the past decade has witnessed the significant proliferation of a variety of visual approaches to research among tourism scholars. Visual methods are not only increasingly perceived as valid and legitimate methods, but also as methods which can enable the production of knowledge on previously relatively under-researched themes.

Visual methodologies offer numerous opportunities for research on tourism cities in that visual approaches to research can, for example, enable scholars to collect and analyse a variety of materials containing (audio)visual representations of a destination. Examples of such materials include tourist photographs or videos, promotional materials, brochures, postcards, news reports and articles, films, TV-Series, documentaries, animations, travel vlogs and blogs. The importance of sourcing and analysing these materials through analytical approaches such as discourse, narrative, content or semiotic analyses lies in the fact that these materials project, and inevitably also partly inform, the image of a destination.

In addition, numerous possibilities for research on tourism cities are also afforded by elicitation techniques and researcher- or research participant-produced visuals (Rakic and Chambers, 2012b). Importantly, fieldwork methods such as (audio)visually recorded sessions of participant observation and interviews can also enable researchers to produce visual research outputs such as a photographic exhibition, a video or an academic documentary (see Rakic and Chambers, 2010; Rakic, 2010), assisting researchers to inspire further discussions about their project, its findings and implications among the wider public, policymakers or stakeholders of tourism development at a destination.

Given the importance of the visual imagination of a destination prior to visitation, the importance of visually recording (and in some cases live streaming) the tourist experience while at a destination, and the role of the visuals such as photographs and videos in remembering and narrating the tourist experience, visual methodologies are likely to be at the heart of research on tourist cities in the future.

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CSR and ethics in tourism: introducing the special section

This special issue of International Journal of Tourism Cities on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethics in tourism was originally conceived as a point of departure for a call for papers based on the international conference on Tourism, Ethics and Global Citizenship: Connecting the dots in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands. The conference was co-organised by Breda University of Applied Sciences, Saxion University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University, and was held in July 2017.

The concept of CSR is a frequently debated topic in tourism and was coined for the first time in 1953 with Bowen’s publication Social Responsibilities of the Businessman. Bowen (1953, p. 6) defined CSR as the obligation “to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action, which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society”. Nowadays, the expansive literature on CSR covers several definitions of the concept. Crépin (2012) pointed out, for example, that the concept of social responsibility suggests that companies should take into account social, environmental and economic concerns in their operations and their interactions with their customers, employees and shareholders. A similar definition is given by Aguinis (2011, p. 855), who states that CSR is defined as “context-specific organisational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance”.

Many scholars have attempted to define CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008), but there is still no universal consensus (Gatti et al., 2012). One of the reasons for the difficulty in establishing an agreed-upon definition for CSR lies in the many structures and intersections of academic discussion that have contributed gradually to a shared understanding of CSR (Coles et al., 2013; Dahlsrud, 2008). As Orlitzky and Shen (2013) point out, CSR is not a homogenous concept and there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for businesses.

The on-going academic discussions about the definition of CSR introduced new concepts and theories to address the ethical dimension of the phenomenon. In particular, Weeden (2002) takes the definition of CSR a step further by introducing ethics, along with the three “classical pillars” of sustainable tourism: economic, social and environmental indicators. Although ethical tourism is a relatively new concept in the field, it has been embraced widely on a cross-disciplinary level.

Within the past couple of decades, ethical tourism has become an important point of reference, not only as an academic subject of study but also as a business practice (Fennell, 2006; Lovelock and Lovelock, 2013). As a result, enterprises are urged to commit to CSR by operating ethically and contributing to economic development while ensuring the wellbeing of employees and the local community, which is impacted by the business.

Tour operators and airlines followed the dominant trend and promote the concept of ethical tourism in the context of their commercial activities (Coles et al., 2011). In particular, various businesses and websites endorse the ethical tourism discourse by offering relevant products, which target people across the globe who consider themselves socially aware and responsible citizens (Butcher, 2015). This could be explained by the fact that tour operators are often confronted by ethical and human rights dilemmas. Critical human rights issues come up in daily business operations and in communication with customers, as well as in broader business relations. This responsibility also applies to human rights related to supply chains, labour rights, security, information technology, freedom of expression, forced and child labour, and investment.
issues (Posner, 2016, p. 705). As Lovelock and Lovelock (2013, p. 32) argue, “ethical tourism is therefore not merely a form of tourism, but a way of thinking that applies to all forms of tourism”. While it might raise more questions than answers for those involved in tourism practices, it still lies at the heart of ethical decision-making.

On an academic level, only recently have we witnessed the inclusion of ethics, moral and existential issues (Isaac and Platenkamp, 2013) in scholarly tourism debates. Freedom of movement, the right to travel, and simultaneously, the rise of a multitude of alternative forms of tourism have provided sufficient justification for discussing the manifold relationships between tourism, CSR and ethics. It is, therefore, important that scholars from different disciplines converse and debate this noteworthy and timely theme. In particular, there is a need for understanding the relations and effects between the way we, as scholars, tourists or hosts, interact with each other and the environment and how people reflect on these encounters in terms of hospitality, inequality, gender, (de)colonisation, human rights, poverty, movement restrictions, identity and so forth.

In this introduction, we think it is important to introduce the concept of polyphonic dialogue. As Clifford and Marcus (1986) argued, a polyphonic dialogue replaces the truth claims of isolated parties with a careful process of persuasion in which no voices or parties are excluded. It is comparable with multilogicality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) and, in honour of Hannah Arendt (1958), to the concept of “agora”, or a public place for discussion. Arendt introduced the agora as an open or public space, similar to the forum Romanum, where people present themselves as individuals with independent thoughts. This special issue is a public place for discussion like the “agora”.

Nevertheless, we would like first to briefly elaborate on three concepts before talking about the papers presented in this special issue: morals, ethics and meta-ethics. In general, we distinguish between morals, ethics and meta-ethics as follows. Morals is about good or bad behaviour, whereas ethics is about the principles that are fundamental for good behaviour, and meta-ethics is about the legitimisation of these principles. For example, in a moral discussion, someone could ask whether poverty or slum tourism is good or bad? An ethical discussion, on the other hand, would be concerned with the principles behind this judgment. For example, is exhibiting places associated with death and suffering for tourism acceptable, ethical or correct? In this case, we would focus on the underlining principles that guide this judgment. In meta-ethics, we should address the central question, which is, what are the foundations and meanings of moral values.

In ethical and meta-ethical discussions, scholars are challenged to find their way between relativism and absolutism. The fundamental challenge is to develop points of view between relativism and absolutism. One approach to resolving this dilemma can be found in an old discussion introduced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who distinguishes two discourses, one based on scientific knowledge and another based on a moral discourse dealing with “wise” human actions, which leads to a moral practice called “phronēsis” (Nussbaum, 1990). Phronēsis is defined as a “good action” or “practical wisdom”. In such a practice, the dilemma between relativism and absolutism will not be solved in an absolute manner. It will be included in an ongoing discussion in which principles are used in a flexible way to support the arguments of different voices. In a polyphonic dialogue (mentioned above), people realise and respect differences, but nevertheless confront their positions in a critical and respectful way in the “agora”. This special issue offers just such a space for public dialogue.

Outline of this special issue

This special issue aims at strengthening the academic and professional networks that are necessary to push forward discussions of tourism’s manifold intersections with existing and emergent CSR ethical approaches. In parallel, it endeavours to encourage and advance theoretical, conceptual and empirical research on CSR and ethics in the context of tourism.

The six articles of this special issue are organised into three sections. Each section consists of two articles, which are grouped thematically. The first section deals with “the perceptions and practices of CSR” in specific geographical contexts, while the second section focuses on the
interplay of CSR and ethics” in the tourism sector. The last section discusses the “subject of ethics in tourism as a social practice and as a discipline”. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly introduce the subjects of study, the research methods used and the main argument(s) of each article.

The first article, by Borges, Veira and Rodrigues, assesses the perceptions of domestic and international tourists in relation to practices of social responsibility in the city of Porto, Portugal. It is a quantitative study based on close-ended questionnaires and explores the level of visitor awareness of CSR practices in the fields of environment, customer relations and community. Perceptions of the brand image of the city and how visitor demographics may influence that image are also explored. The authors argue that tourists have an overall awareness of the social responsibility of Porto, but that the environment is less acknowledged in comparison with concepts of community and customer. Tourist demographics like education level, employment status and place of residence also influenced participants’ level of awareness of the CSR image of the city.

The second article is a qualitative study that explores the relationship between leadership, responsibility and resilience in the tourist destination of Bavaria, Germany. Pechlaner, Zacher, Eckert and Petersik’s findings endorse the Destination Network Responsibility approach by highlighting the need for the destination manager to maintain good relationships with all stakeholders in the urban setting, while coordinating key tourism players in rural areas. On the level of Destination Management Organisation (DMO), it is argued that the process of building resilience requires the active participation of employees, local residents and, more importantly, destination managers. In short, resilience is a shared responsibility of various stakeholders in the DMO that can only be achieved through efficient communication, collaboration and coordination of short-term and long-term strategic goals.

The second section of the special issue focuses on “the interplay of CSR and ethics” in the tourism sector, while making an effort to take into consideration the conditions that may influence this relationship negatively or positively. Particularly interesting is Skinner’s study in the third article, in which she examines whether the economic restraints and cultural values imposed on small-to-medium-sized organisations have an impact on the level of unethical and illegal practices they engage in. The author uses a mixed research method with an emphasis on qualitative data by focusing on Corfu, an island in Greece. Skinner collects quantitative data via close-ended questionnaires, while enriching her study with an exploratory case study that takes into consideration the context in which the social phenomenon under study occurs. It is argued that the socially responsible and ethical practices of Small–Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) should apply to all actors involved and are not necessarily linked to legal requirements. Cultural values and economic difficulties have an impact on the practices of the SMTEs, while the economic crisis in Greece has led a number of enterprises to compromise socially responsible and ethical practices in order to survive financially.

Also of interest is Biaett’s exploration of the ethical and social responsibility of event organisers when they estimate event attendance. The article draws on the understudied problem of publishing unrealistically inflated participant figures for various events and its ethical, social, environmental and economic implications for the stakeholders involved. To investigate the topic, the author applies the content analysis method to a number of articles that include both academic and popular media narratives. The findings reveal that academic articles and popular media have not been preoccupied with the ethical dimensions of estimating event and festival attendance. Biaett suggests a three-step process that will re-establish the lost validity in the estimation of participant figures and that will embrace the ethical and social responsibility, not only of organisers, but also of those who are responsible for reporting this information.

Picking up where section two leaves off, section three focuses mainly on “ethics in tourism as a social practice and as a discipline”. The fifth article of the special issue investigates whether tourism as a social practice has a potential role to play in social justice and worldwide peace. Schneider explores tourist reactions to the “dual narrative” tours offered in Israel and West Bank, Palestine by Israelis and Palestinians, respectively, where each group addresses the conflict from its own historical and political perspective. The author uses a mixed research
Method approach based on quantitative data from post-tour surveys and qualitative data retrieved from open-ended impact questions asked of the tour participants. Schneider challenges some of the pre-existing literature by arguing that tourism has the power to shift people’s attitudes towards a more holistic understanding of complicated political issues. The dual narrative approach shifted the attitude of the vast majority of respondents to a more supportive and compassionate stance towards both sides of the conflict. It was also noted that this process enabled participants to have an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the issue, as opposed to a more simplistic and absolute judgement. Schneider’s findings reveal that tourism as a social phenomenon and practice has the power to contribute to building bridges of understanding and cultivating ethically and socially responsible tourists who will actively contribute to peace and justice activism.

The final article of this special issue is very different from what we have been conditioned to recognise as an academic article. Munar takes a very critical stance towards academia in general, and more specifically towards tourism as a field and a discipline. In this theoretical paper, the author draws inspiration from classical and post-disciplinary approaches in order to critically reflect on the academic ranking and metric culture that dominates academia today. This paper indirectly proposes an academic writing style different from the mainstream, highly structured, sterilised and citation-sensitive one that the vast majority of academics have been conditioned to produce. The author analyses the concept of “hyper academia” in a non-mainstream approach in a space where alternative conceptual tools can be used, such as audio-visual elements, philosophical experimental thought, storytelling and a manifesto that proposes the “humanisation of academic cultures and environments”.

Summing up, this special issue contributes to the development of a tourism research agenda that challenges academic disciplines to incorporate CSR and ethics, as subjects and principles, into their research. In other words, the aim of this special issue is not to offer a conclusive assessment of the relationship between CSR and ethics, but to open up the academic discussion to questions that have never been asked and subjects that remain unexplored. As scholars, we ourselves have the ethical responsibility to raise the kinds of questions that will revolutionise not only our discipline, but the world as a social space.

References


Further reading


The perception of corporate social responsibility of the city of Porto

Ana Pinto Borges, Elvira Pacheco Vieira and Paula Rodrigues

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess the perception of the city of Porto as a destination engaged with social responsibility practices. The authors intend to analyse if the national and international tourists know the social responsibility practices of the city and if they associate them to the domains of community, environment and customer presented by Öberseder et al. (2014) and the type of CSR image that is presented (Dean, 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Menon and Kahn, 2003).

Design/methodology/approach – The authors used a survey to assess the perception of the tourist regarding the social responsibility practices of the city of Porto. The authors applied a factorial analysis and a logistic regression.

Findings – The tourists showed an adequate knowledge regarding the social responsibility practices carried out by the city. The respondents separated the dimensions of perceptions of CSR and revealed that they influence the (re)visit and further recommendation of the city. More specifically, the authors also verified that the CSR image and community, environment and customer domains play an important role in the knowledge of the social responsibility practices engaged by the city of Porto.

Originality/value – It is the first time that the scales of Öberseder et al. (2014) and Dean (2002), Lichtenstein et al. (2004) and Menon and Kahn (2003) were applied in the tourism context. Furthermore, considering that the city of Porto presents a high level of growth in tourism related activities, it is important to study the impact of CSR in the development of a sustainable tourism and its impact on the (re)visit and recommendation.

Keywords Tourism development, Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Sustainable tourism

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Portugal has grown as a tourist attraction. This acknowledgement was internationally confirmed when Porto was chosen as the best European destination of the World Travel Awards. The main Portuguese cities have also contributed to this recognition, and in particular the city of Porto, which was elected, for the third time, the best European destination (2012, 2014 and 2017).

The Portuguese tourism sector has grown steadily in recent years and will continue to generate a series of opportunities and challenges, thus creating the need for solutions to ensure a structured growth path for the sector. One of the strategies is characterised by the ongoing implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Associating a destination tourism brand engaging in CSR policies, activities and practices could be one of the ways to continue to maintain successful tourist attraction.

In the specific case of the city of Porto, the Historic Centre was classified as cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 1996, more precisely since 2004, when Porto Vivo – SRU (Society for Urban Rehabilitation), a public corporation, has been promoting the rehabilitation of the Historic Centre and prioritising private investment above the public actions (Santos et al., 2017). Porto Vivo aims at developing durable and strategic projects while also: safeguarding the built heritage; promoting contemporary comfort conditions in buildings built many centuries ago; respecting the environment, both local and global; caring for people, their identity, their culture, their way of
life and their well-being; and regulating functions in order to have a suitable mix of activities (Santos et al., 2017). The city has been incorporating these actions in its brand image.

On an international level, there are a number of examples of how governments and planners worked together to design low-emission, health-promoting communities, integrating urban planning, green spaces and waste management strategies as Freiburg in Germany, Curitiba in Brazil, Da Nang in Vietnam (World Health Organization, 2017), Copenhagen in Denmark (Font and McCabe, 2017), amongst others. In the recent Sustainable Cities Index, in 2016, it is mentioned the top five of the cities around the world that show a high level of performance across the three pillars of sustainability (people, planet and profit) and promote their behaviour in their brand images, which are: Zurich, Singapore, Stockholm, Vienna and London (ARCADIS, 2016).

Insert the sustainability criteria in the marketing of tourist destinations is common practice in several countries. This is a topic of great interest, considering that one of the advantages of tourist destination brands lies in the fact that it is an infinite sustainable resource as long as its value is maintained through a suitable marketing strategy. In today’s highly competitive business world, companies supplement their marketing activities with socially responsible or sustainable practices to gain competitive advantage.

The advantages of CSR have been recognised by many tourism businesses, intermediaries, trade associations, lobby groups and nongovernmental organisations (Coles et al., 2013); however, to date there has been no organised analysis of the academic body of understanding on CSR in travel, tourism and hospitality (Van de Mosselaer et al., 2012).

One of the main fociusses for studies on tourism CSR has been stakeholder engagement. This has been mainly centred on the social relations of tourism CSR, more specifically the relationships with external stakeholders inside destinations and their communities (Coles et al., 2013). Some studies have used the concept of responsibility to explore tourism development processes and reorganise considerations about their influences (Williams et al., 2007). Engagement and responsibility are necessary concerns not only in the short-term but also well after post-production and distribution (Coles et al., 2013). In this context, a city that presents a socially responsible brand image is a reflection not only of a long-term public policy, but also of the behaviour of the private and public organisations and other stakeholders. These stakeholders include tour operators, customers, employees, suppliers, nongovernmental organisations, government and consumers (Ayuso, 2006; Cheyne and Barnett, 2001).

In this study, we intend to assess the perception of the tourists (national and international) regarding the city of Porto, as a tourist destination engaged with social responsibility practices. The originality of the study is not restricted because it is the first time that this study is applied to this city, but also the assessed domains of recognition (Öberseder et al., 2014) and image of CSR (Dean, 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Menon and Kahn, 2003) are making their debut in the tourist destination association. It should also be noted that the CSR was chosen as the lead concept, an innovative way to study a tourist destination, and was not intended to evaluate the sustainable/responsible governance.

This paper is organised as follows. We start with the presentation of the literature review and of the hypotheses of the study. After that, we describe the questionnaire and, in order to reach the confirmations of our hypotheses, we present the factorial analysis and the econometric model and its results. We end with the conclusions and future research suggested.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

There are no more doubts about the meaningfulness of the impact of tourism in the global economy; being a global phenomenon, tourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Within this scope, the studies in tourism CSR have grown and defined a set of motivations and barriers (Ayuso, 2006) similar in comparison to generic CSR research. Some work has suggested that technical issues and infrastructures play a greater role in tourism CSR (Wells et al., 2015). Other works highlight that society as a special characteristic of CSR activities in tourism (Nicolau, 2008).
Regarding environmental CSR, tourism research has recently increased significantly with studies highlighting CSR in museums and heritage (Edwards, 2007), mass tourism (Weaver, 2014), tour operators, airlines (Coles et al., 2011) and leisure and sport (Salome et al., 2013). Some studies have shown that, in tourism, companies engage in sustainable and environmental practices due to stakeholder pressure (Alvarado-Herrera et al., 2015). These pressure comes from public and private organisations, tour operators, customers, employees, suppliers and consumers, amongst others (Ayuso, 2006; Cheyne and Barnett, 2001).

We have observed that, until now, studying the CSR in a context related to cities/destinations is indeed unusual, as cities are not corporations. However, given that the tourism sector is fundamental to the economic development of countries, regions and cities, it is necessary for governments and for local bodies to take action in promoting CSR as a response to the social and environmental problems caused by corporate action within a globalised economic context. In the study, Fox et al. (2002) classify government initiatives of CSR from the four main roles developed by governments: mandating, facilitating, partnering and endorsing and then, classifies government initiatives under ten CSR agenda items. They set a matrix of possible activities for the public sector to carry out in each role, depending on the type of CSR which is being dealt with (Moon, 2002). Public sector activities that set a clear and transparent framework for the private sector in tourism’s engagement in public policy can make an important contribution to assure the alignment of business practices with sustainable-development goals.

In this sense, a city can be seen as a corporation that offers a product (a destination) where the attractiveness goes beyond tourist resources, recreational activities and entertainment, hotel establishments, catering, infrastructure, hospitality, amongst others. This is reflected not only by the price but also by the brand image. A city that presents a socially responsible brand image is a reflection of a long-term public policy and of the behaviour of the private enterprises. In this paper, we consider the CSR as the main concept and it was not evaluate the sustainable governance.

2.1 Corporate social responsibility

The concept of CSR has its origins in the works of Bowen (1953), who defined as the obligation “to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society” (p. 6). Many authors have attempted to define it (Dahlsrud, 2008), but resulted in a lack of commonly accepted definitions (Gatti et al., 2012). Part of the reason for the difficulty of establishing an agreed definition for CSR or a single universal term lies in the many frameworks and intersections of academic debate that has contributed gradually over time to contemporary shared understandings of CSR (Coles et al., 2013; Dahlsrud, 2008).

In Dahlsrud’s (2008) analysis of 37 definitions of CSR, it was established that most were substantially more complex than a pure triple bottom line (social, economic and environmental responsibility) and described five common dimensions: social (the relationship between business and society), economic (socio-economic or financial aspects, including describing CSR in terms of a business operation), environment (the natural environment), stakeholder (the stakeholders or stakeholder groups) and voluntariness (actions not prescribed by law). Then, in the pragmatic domain of CSR activities, practice and research, definitions often incorporate ideas from sustainable development, stakeholder theory, business ethics and philanthropic concerns.

CSR is a multi-faceted concept along with a socially-constructed and positioned idea (Coles et al., 2013). The European Commission includes dimensions of sustainable development and stakeholder management by defining CSR as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p. 5). According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), CSR assumes the pursuit of commercial success while respecting ethical values, people, communities and the natural environment. Crépin (2012) pointed out that the concept of social responsibility suggests that companies take into account the social, environmental and economic concerns in their operations and their interactions with their customers, employees and shareholders. According to Carroll (1979), a corporation should fulfill the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. Sheldon and Park (2011, p. 398)
defined CSR as the need for organisations to consider the best of the wider communities in which they exist, both local and global, in terms of the economic, social, environmental, legal, ethical and philanthropic impact of their way of doing business.

One point in consensus is that the CSR has a voluntary nature and it is necessary to include in the stakeholders considerations, an equilibrium between the dimensions of the CSR. These concerns complemented by the maximisation of the performance in each sector, and in the specific case in the tourism sector, may be the ideal solutions for the strategic behaviour in the competitive market. In this sense, it is relevant to evaluate the reaction of the CSR programs implemented in tourist destinations and the reaction of the tourists. In this context, we evaluate if the national and international tourists know the social responsibility practices of the city and if they associate them to the domains of community, environment and customer presented by Öberseder et al. (2014). It is therefore hypothesised that:

**H1.** The tourists know about the meaning of social responsibility in the community, environment and customer domains.

Corporate marketing, that is, integrated marketing processes that are based on concepts such as corporate image, branding, identity, reputation and communication may suggest the need for a stakeholder-focused approach thus allowing the company to establish a commitment to social responsibility (Stanaland et al., 2011). Therefore, CSR image could be defined as the perception of corporate stakeholders’ responses to general social concerns of stakeholder groups (Lai et al., 2010). CSR should have a significant influence in the creation of an image in the customer’s mind. We evaluate the CSR image of the city of Porto taking into account the studies of Dean (2002), Lichtenstein et al. (2004), Menon and Kahn (2003). Then, we hypothesised that:

**H2.** The tourists have a CSR image of Porto.

The adoption of CSR practices is seen as an intangible benefit, such as an improved image in the market due to responsible behaviour (Kinnan, 2001; Sharma, 2000), differentiation with respect to competitors (Garay and Font, 2012) and a greater customer satisfaction level (Nicolau, 2008).

### 2.2 CSR and the demographic characteristics of consumers

The consumers do not react the same way when buying ethical products. In this scope, several studies have been exploring how the demographic characteristics of consumers respond to social responsibility practices implemented by the organisations and reflected in their products. We obtained different results, but we also noted a trend. Dickson (2001) found that age, income and employment status were not discriminating between socially conscious consumers who attach a lot of importance to no-sweat labels on apparel and those consumers who do not. Some other studies found that the ethical consumer was a person with a relatively high income, education and social status (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Maigian and Ferrell, 2001; Roberts, 1996). In the same line, results show that women, higher education and higher income groups are more supportive of firm’s CSR practices (Youn and Kim, 2008), and older consumers are more likely to favour ethical issues through purchasing (Carrigan et al., 2004). Mohr and Webb (2005) indicate that several personal trait variables would affect whether or how strongly consumers respond to a company’s level of social responsibility. They also found that the relatively high income and education level of the respondents have greater concerns about social responsibility practices. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) suggest that consumers are more likely to respond to a company’s social responsibility record when they identify with the company. Tian et al. (2011) also found that relationships between consumers’ demographics and their responses to CSR are positively related. In this study, we also intend to evaluate if the sociodemographic characteristics of the tourists influence the perception of CSR from those who visit Porto city. Then, we can hypothesise that:

**H3.** Sociodemographic variables of consumer’s influences perception of CSR who visit Porto city.

It is interesting to know.

### 2.3 Consumer response to CSR

In the marketplace little is known about the consumer understanding of CSR activities and its effect on consumer behaviour (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Fatma and Rahman, 2015).
A growing body of academic research attests the positive relationship between the CSR practices and consumer responses (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Creyer and Ross, 1997). Researchers endeavoured to examine the impact of the social responsibility of the company on consumer behaviour by demonstrating the existence of a link between socially responsible initiatives and the positive, emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses of consumers (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Swaen and Chumpitaz, 2008).

Despite the fact, according to a number of studies analysing the influence of CSR on consumer behaviour (Marin and Ruiz, 2007; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Tian et al., 2011), the results are contradictory (Marquina and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). Many studies have confirmed the positive influence of social responsibility on consumer behaviour (Creyer and Ross, 1997; Brown and Dacin, 1997) while in other cases this notion has been rejected (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Bouldstridge and Carrigan, 2000), as CSR is far from the traditional criteria of purchasing such as price and quality (Bouldstridge and Carrigan, 2000).

Kim et al. (2012, p. 272) assert that “CSR is typically understood by external stakeholders as a non-profit-seeking activity that is far from the general profit-seeking nature of a corporation”. Consumers, as one of those stakeholders, want to know about the good efforts of businesses they buy from. The Attribution theory (Anderson and Weiner, 1992; Kelley, 1967) claims that an individual interprets other actors’ behaviours in terms of their causes, which then define his/her actions towards them. In the CSR context, consumers’ interpretations of a cause may determine their responses towards a particular corporate product/brand/place. When they conclude that the business’s motivation falls close to the nature of CSR, they could express more firm-favouring behaviours (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2016).

Consumers’ attributions about a company’s CSR motivation influence their CSR associations, which in turn considerably affect their reactions to those activities (Ellen et al., 2006). In this sense, we intend to evaluate the behaviour of the tourist considering the intention to repeat the tourist destination. Then, we can hypothesise that:

H4. The tourist’s perception of CSR impact on the (re)visit and possible recommendation of the city of Porto.

It should be noted that the city of Porto has been safeguarding the built heritage and respecting the environment, both locally and globally, the rehabilitation process aims at caring for the people, their identity, culture, health and way of life (Santos et al., 2017). As the city has been incorporating these actions in its brand image, in this study the hypotheses are evaluated according to this scope.

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered to tourists (national and international) in the main tourism’s points in the city (near or in: the Dom Luis bridge, the Ribeira, Clérigos Church and Tower, the Lello Bookshop, Douro river and the beaches) during the month of October 2017. All sites were repeated on different days of the week to be able to cover the different types of tourists. The respondents were contacted on location through direct and personal interview by interviewers prepared for this purpose and anonymity was guaranteed. Before the implementation of the questionnaire, we tested it through a previous sample (with different qualifications, professions and age) and in different languages (Portuguese, English, Spanish and French), in order to verify whether the questions were clearly understood and analyse the overall degree of the answers variability. Before starting the interview, the interviewers presented themselves, described the purpose of the study and asked if the respondent was doing tourism in the city of Porto. If that was the case, that questionnaire continued until the end. A sample of tourists produced 958 usable questionnaires.

The questionnaire included the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents — gender, age, marital status, education (complete), work conditions and nationality. After that the respondents were faced with the following question: “Do you know the Social Responsibility practices applied in the city of Porto?” The options “yes” and “no” were given. Furthermore, in this
section the respondents expressed the extent of their agreement using a five-point Likert scale (1—strongly disagree; 2—disagree; 3—neither agree nor disagree; 4—agree; 5—strongly agree) in the statements in relation to CSR of the city of Porto in the domains of community (five statements), environment (five statements) and customer (six statements) presented by Öberseder et al. (2014) and which type of CSR image presented (six statements) developed by Dean (2002), Lichtenstein et al. (2004), and Menon and Kahn (2003). In the final part of the questionnaire the respondents were faced with the question: “Are you planning to return to Porto?” (the options “yes”, “no” and don’t Know were given). Full details can be found in Tables AI and AII.

3.2 Description of the sample, the knowledge of CSR of Porto and intention to return

In the resulting sample of 958 respondents, 49.4 per cent are female and 50.6 per cent male, with an average age of 41. As to the marital status, 47.6 per cent are married, 42.1 per cent single, 7.2 per cent divorced and 3.1 per cent widowed. Regarding qualifications, 1.4 per cent of the respondents have elementary studies, 12.8 per cent secondary studies, 63.2 per cent have a higher level (degree) and 22.6 per cent have a Masters or a PhD. We observe that 62.0 per cent are active in the labour market (45.7 per cent are employed and 16.3 per cent self-employed), 7.3 per cent are unemployed, 16.0 per cent are inactive in the labour market (retired and housewives) and 14.7 per cent are students. We also note an equilibrium in the sample collected in relation to nationality, with 50.6 per cent indicating that they are foreign nationals (non-Portuguese). In relation to CSR in Porto, we verify that 67.3 per cent revealed a certain level of awareness concerning the responsibility practices. Finally, when confronted with the possibility of visiting the city of Porto again, 75.8 per cent stated the intention to return. Details can be found in the top panel of Table I.

3.3 Data analysis

All the analyses were performed with STATA (version 14). All statistical tests were two sided and the level of significance was set at 0.05. The data relating to the 22 statements about domains and CSR image of Porto were subjected to a principal components analysis with varimax rotation in order to identify the main dimensions of CSR. Pre-tests including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were performed to confirm the factorability of the factorial analysis.

The logistic regression was used to explore the determinants of the knowledge about social responsibility practices of the city of Porto considering the sociodemographic variables of the respondents, the main dimensions of CSR and the intention to return to visit the city of Porto. We did not apply the least squares model (OLS), because it ignores the discrete and binary nature of the dependent variable and does not limit the probability between zero and one. Indeed, the model specified to analyse the dependent variables in binary choices is more appropriate (Wooldridge, 2013).

4. Results and discussion

In the second part of the questionnaire respondents were faced with 22 statements which deal with potential reasons associated with the CSR image of the city of Porto. Statements between ES1 and ES5 take into account the community domain, statements ES6 and ES10 the environment domain, statements ES11 and ES16 the customer domain and statements ES17 and ES22 CSR the image. Table II summarises the results of the level of agreement/disagreement of the respondents with each statement using a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”).

We observe that the statements concerning the CSR image of Porto between ES18 and ES22, with the exception of ES17, were clearly approved by respondents and consequently present the highest mean. The results suggest that tourists confirm a strong image of social responsibility in the city of Porto due to the fact that they show a high level of agreement regarding five of the six items measured by Dean (2002), Lichtenstein et al. (2004), and Menon and Kahn (2003). Furthermore, the respondents perceive a city in dynamic economic terms as it contributes to the region’s development and creates employment, not neglecting the values, culture and regional customs.
This result means that in three out of five statements of the community domain presented by Öberseder et al. (2014), the respondents give a high level of agreement with the economic concerns and intangible goods of the city (values, cultures and customs). On the opposite sides are the environmental practices in Porto that yielded lower levels of agreement, with “neither agree nor disagree” as the most common answer, with the exception to ES9. This result indicates that the efforts of public and private organisations are not being perceived by tourists. Font and McCabe (2017) suggested that rather than expecting tourists to demand sustainable products, the public sector itself must acknowledge that they are often the largest buyer of catering, conference, event, hotel and transport services, and it is within their power to introduce sustainability criteria, that will then create a snowball effect. The authors gave the example of the city of Copenhagen. Other example, in other context, was given by Rodríguez and Armas Cruz (2007) when they noted improved financial performance due to the use of CSR practices in hotels when such practices are properly communicated to outside audiences.

### Table I

Sample description, knowledge of CSR of city of Porto and intention to return and percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Freq. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demographic variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less or equal 25</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26–35)</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(36–45)</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(46–55)</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior or equal 56</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling (complete)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary studies</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary studies</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree or PhD</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know the Social Responsibility practices applied in the city of Porto?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you planning to return to Porto?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not Know</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** For reasons of presentation, the age variable was presented in intervals. However, in logit models the variable is continuous.
4.1 The main dimensions of CSR of city of Porto: factorial analysis

In the following analysis, the statements of the scale were analysed together and subjected to a principal components analysis with varimax rotation to identify the main variables of the dimensions of CSR of city of Porto. The indicators of the factorial analysis are the KMO and the Bartlett test that together give an indication of how far the factor analysis should be performed with the data in question. The data obtained show us that the factor analysis should be performed (KMO = 0.876). The statistical value of Bartlett’s test (\(\chi^2 = 5,375.007\)) is significant \((p = 0.000)\), and the correlations between variables are suitable for doing a factor analysis. Table III summarises the main results. Four distinct factors emerged that explain 64.661 per cent of the total variance of the data. All items loaded highly on the factors, and no item loaded on more than one factor, supporting the independence of the dimensions. The criteria for the acceptance of the results were defined by the academic literature (Marôco, 2014). The factors that resulted from the data analysis were CSR image (factor 1), customer domain (factor 2), environment domain (factor 3) and community domain (factor 4).

In conclusion, \(H1\) and \(H2\) are confirmed. The CSR image factor proved to be the most important and explained 36.934 per cent of the variance, followed by the customer domain with 10.563 per cent, the environment domain with 8.761 and the community domain with 8.402 per cent. These results contradict those advocated by several authors who claim that there is still no consensus on how the CSR image is perceived by consumers (Berger et al., 2006; Du et al., 2007; Fournier, 1998). Gonzalez et al. (2009) argue that socially responsible consumption leads consumers to desire to express social and environmental concerns through their choices of consumption. Recent developments in the CSR study converge to consider that economic, social and environmental responsibility can create a strategic approach towards sustainability by creating societal value (Li et al., 2013). This result is congruent with others that defended that CSR’s ultimate goal is sustainability that incorporates the economic, social, and environmental responsibilities while linking to the company’s success (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002; Van Marrewijk, 2003).
4.2 Econometric model—dependent variable: knowledge of CSR of city of Porto

Results of Table IV suggest that the older tourists are more familiar with the social responsibility practices of the city of Porto (odds ratio (OR) = 0.01; 95% confidence interval (95% CI): 0.00, 0.03). This result comes in line with the results obtained by Bartels and Onwenzen (2014) who, in their study, found that older consumers are more inclined to buy products with socially responsible concerns. The tourist with a Masters or a PhD, in relation to those who have elementary studies, know more about the social responsibility practices of the city of Porto (OR = 1.29; 95% CI: 0.68, 1.90). We observe similar results for tourists that have secondary studies or a university degree. We also observe that the tourists that are self-employed in relation to those who are employed have more knowledge about the CSR of Porto (OR = 0.63; 95 CI: 0.14, 1.12). In relation to the nationality of the tourists, the natives are more informed about the practices of social responsibility of the city (OR = 0.63; 95% CI: 0.41, 1.16). This finding suggests that in the future public and private organisations need to improve the promotion of the social responsibility practices implemented in city of Porto for the foreign tourists. The H3 is only partially confirmed. Through the analysis of the results, we conclude that age, education, self-employment and nationality have an effect on the knowledge of Porto’s social responsibility practices. The results obtained related to age and education are in accordance with some authors as for example Youn and Kim (2008) and Mohr and Webb (2005).

The tourists who do not intend to return to the city, in relation to those who intend to revisit, know less about Porto’s social responsibility practices (OR = −0.51; 95% CI: −1.47, 0.44). The H4 is confirmed. The tourist’s perception of CSR has a positive influence in the intention to return and consequently will have a greater influence in recommending the city as a destination to visit. In terms of social responsibility dimensions, it is verified that they all have a positive effect on the knowledge of the CSR of Porto. Once again H1 and H2 are confirmed. Management practices perceived as sustainable are related to quality, environment and CSR, commonly referred to as the triple bottom line (Bagur-Femenías et al., 2015).

5. Conclusions and future research

Although there has been an important effort to initiate critical investigation on tourism CSR, this field of study is at a crucial moment in its development. Academic investigation on tourism CSR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CSR image</th>
<th>Customer domain</th>
<th>Environment domain</th>
<th>Community domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES20</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES21</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES18</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES19</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES22</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES15</td>
<td>0.794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES14</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES13</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES16</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES7</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES6</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES8</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES1</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES2</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES4</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalues/rotation sums squared loadings</td>
<td>5.540</td>
<td>1.585</td>
<td>1.314</td>
<td>1.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% variance</td>
<td>36.934</td>
<td>10.563</td>
<td>8.761</td>
<td>8.402</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

has ignored many important topics that have been extensively developed in mainstream CSR research, namely the definition of CSR within the scope of sustainable tourism, information disseminations, communication, corporate image, the nature, scope and links between stakeholders and the relative contribution of CSR to the pillars of sustainable tourism.

To our knowledge this is the first study of CSR with tourists in Porto City. The study yields several important conclusions. In our specific case, the tourists (national and international) know about the meaning of social responsibility of Porto in the community, environment and customer domains. However, when the statements are evaluated separately, the environmental practices in Porto yielded lower levels of agreement. This result was not expected because since 2004 one of the strategies was the respect for the environment, both local and global (Santos et al., 2017). This outcome explains why the efforts of public and private organisations are not being perceived by tourists.

In the context of CSR image of the city, the tourists reveal a strong image because the statements evaluated individually and together were distinguished as the main factors of agreement. We observed that the older tourists, those who have a higher education level, and the self-employed have a better engagement with the social responsibility practices applied in Porto. This result allows the segmentation of tourists in the scope of sociodemographic characteristics and also provides the creation of an image of the destination more directed to these characteristics.

We also verify that the national tourists have a greater knowledge comparing to foreign tourists. This result was already expected, but it can be concluded that in the future the public organisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IV</th>
<th>The knowledge of the social responsibility practices of the Porto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odds ratio (95% CI) p-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.06 (−0.24, 0.36) 0.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.01 (−0.00, 0.03) 0.073*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.14 (−0.27, 0.54) 0.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0.10 (−0.58, 0.78) 0.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>−0.53 (−1.48, 0.43) 0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling (complete)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary studies</td>
<td>1.28 (0.72, 1.83) 0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1.41 (0.86, 1.97) 0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or PhD</td>
<td>1.29 (0.68, 1.90) 0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>0.63 (0.14, 1.12) 0.011**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>−0.31 (−0.91, 0.29) 0.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>−0.45 (−1.06, 0.15) 0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>−0.68 (−2.07, 0.71) 0.339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>−0.02 (−0.51, 0.47) 0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>0.79 (0.41, 1.16) 0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>−0.51 (−1.47, 0.44) 0.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>0.17 (−0.32, 0.65) 0.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR image</td>
<td>0.03 (−0.18, 0.12) 0.004**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Domain</td>
<td>0.34 (0.18, 0.49) 0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Domain</td>
<td>0.04 (−0.11, 0.19) 0.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Domain</td>
<td>0.22 (0.06, 0.37) 0.006*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.55 (0.58, 2.52) 0.002**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.
and the companies of the tourist sector should focus their communication on the practices of social responsibility to the foreigners. Companies need to identify who are the consumers that consider CSR-related activities and allocate the necessary resources to those activities (Torres et al., 2012). It is now well known that the time to form an image of a company by the consumer is made through the information made available through its characteristics and activities (Pérez, García de los Salmones and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013).

An important conclusion is the scope of the intention to return that we confirmed was the positive influence in tourists who know the practices of social responsibility carried out by the city. This result reinforces the need to communicate these practices in order to continue to maintain the city with a strong tourist demand.

Some additional research limitations should be admitted. It is not known which practices of social responsibility tourists know, or whether this knowledge differs from national and international tourists. In the current research, it was not explored whether knowledge and CSR image were decisive factors in the choice of tourist destination. Another limitation that should be highlighted is that the intention to return to visit the city of Porto should be crossed with the main reasons (e.g., visiting friends and/or family, in business, by the wealth of the city heritage/museums, amongst others) that led tourists to visit the city. Another point that should be enhanced is the origin of the tourist, because this information would be relevant to evaluate if the origin of a socially responsible destination changes the perception of the tourist in relation to the city of Porto. And finally, these are limitations that may be considered in a future research. Some information could be added in further studies, and a qualitative analysis could also be considered.

References


**Further reading**


### Table A1  English version of the questionnaire

#### Socio-demographic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes □</th>
<th>No □</th>
<th>(note: the questionnaire only continues for tourist)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you visiting the city of Porto?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male □</td>
<td>Female □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single □</td>
<td>Married □</td>
<td>Divorced □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (complete)</td>
<td>Basic □</td>
<td>Secondary □</td>
<td>Bachelor’s □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Conditions</td>
<td>Paid employment □</td>
<td>Self-employed □</td>
<td>Unemployed □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Portuguese □</td>
<td>Other □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Social Responsibility Practices regarding the city of Porto

Several statements are presented below. Indicate with a cross your degree of agreement on each one. (Be aware of the scale of 1 – Completely disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither agree or disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 – Completely agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES1: Porto contributes to the economic development of the region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES2: Create employment in the region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES3: Uses local products and materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES4: Respects values, culture and regional customs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES5: Communicate openly and honestly with the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES6: Porto has concerns about reducing energy consumption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES7: With the reduction of the energy consumption of CO2 emissions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES8: Waste prevention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES9: Recycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES10: The limits of corporate environmental protection are higher than those legally required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES11: Implements sales practices of your services/fair products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES12: Report clearly and comprehensively about the services/products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES13: Ensures quality standards in your services/products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES14: Offers fair prices for services/products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES15: Offers safe services/products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES16: Provides the possibility of a complaint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES17: The city of Porto is aware of environmental matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES18: The city of Porto fulfils its social responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES19: Porto puts something back into society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES20: I think that the city of Porto acts with the society’s interest in mind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES21: The city of Porto acts in a socially responsible way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES22: The city of Porto integrates philanthropic contributions into its actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Intention to return

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes □</th>
<th>No □</th>
<th>Don’t know □</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you planning to return to Porto?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table AII: List of dependent and explanatory variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory variables</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociodemographic variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Dummy: 1 = female; 2 = male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Continuous variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>Values 1–4: 1 = single; 2 = married; 3 = divorced; 4 = widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling (complete)</td>
<td>Values 1–4: 1 = elementary studies; 2 = secondary studies; 3 = degree; 4 = Master’s degree or PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work conditions</td>
<td>Values 1–4: 1 = employed; 2 = self-employed; 3 = unemployed; 4 = retired; 5 = domestic; 6 = student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Dummy: 1 = Portuguese; 0 = other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social responsibility practices regarding the city of Porto</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know what social responsibility practices are?</td>
<td>Dummy: 1 = Yes; 0 = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES1 Porto contributes to the economic development of the region</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES2 Create employment in the region</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES3 Uses local products and materials</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
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<td>ES4 Respects values, culture and regional customs</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES5 Communicate openly and honestly with the community</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES6 Porto has concerns about reducing energy consumption</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES7 With the reduction of the energy consumption of CO2 emissions</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES8 Waste prevention</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES9 Recycle</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES10 The limits of corporate environmental protection are higher than those legally required</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES11 Implements sales practices of your services/fair products</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
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<td>ES12 Report clearly and comprehensively about the services/products</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES13 Ensures quality standards in your services/products</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES14 Offers fair prices for services/products</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES15 Offers safe services/products</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES16 Provides the possibility of a complaint</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES17 The city of Porto is aware of environmental matters</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES18 The city of Porto fulfils its social responsibilities</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES19 Porto puts something back into society</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES20 I think that the city of Porto acts with the society’s interest in mind</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES21 The city of Porto acts in a socially responsible way</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES22 The city of Porto integrates philanthropic contributions into its actions</td>
<td>Scale 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you planning to return to Porto?</td>
<td>Values 1–3: 1 = 1 = Yes; 0 = No; 3 = do not know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know the Social responsibility practices applied at city of Porto?</td>
<td>Dummy: 1 = Yes; 0 = No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corresponding author
Ana Pinto Borges can be contacted at: anaborges@isag.pt
Joint responsibility and understanding of resilience from a DMO perspective – an analysis of different situations in Bavarian tourism destinations

Harald Pechlaner, Daniel Zacher, Christian Eckert and Lukas Petersik

Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to discuss responsibility in tourism destinations. On the basis of a resilience approach, central aspects of leadership and of responsibility in destination networks are introduced and, a contribution to a conceptual analysis of the future viability of tourism destinations is made. This contributes to a better understanding of resilience from a destination management organization (DMO) perspective in the context of shared responsibility.

Design/methodology/approach – To achieve this goal, a qualitative interview series was conducted with destination managers in urban and rural areas. The interviews were evaluated using the method of GABEK®, in order to reveal and visualize semantic relationships between the specific statements. This method allows the representation of linkages and relationships of keywords from interview transcripts in the form of network graphs.

Findings – A major result is the existence of a network of leaders who take responsibility for tourism development within a tourism destination. Within this network, the destination manager once again plays a key role by developing and formulating visions, goals and strategies. In this context, the relevant employees of the DMO have an important role to play, since they are an important resource of tourism development due to their experience and competences.

Originality/value – The paper contributes to a practical view on the development of visions and strategies. It analyzes challenges and possible ways to communicate with the required political and public actors of the destination as well as with the service providers to regard destination development as a collaborative task.

Keywords Responsibility, Leadership, Tourism, Resilience, Destination development, Resilience understanding

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The tourism sector is dependent on various influencing factors regarding both the organization of cooperation among the tourist actors within a defined area and external framework conditions. Fundamentally, this is not a new phenomenon; tourism development constantly reflects social, economic and ecological change processes. In a European context, a tourism destination is often organized as a marketing and/or managing entity, and is directly faced with such circumstances (Mason, 2015). Against the backdrop of challenges like terrorism, social and ecological changes or economic transformation processes, touristic destinations are increasingly faced with the question of how they can and should appropriately act (Hall and Page, 2014). The responsible actors of a destination, within their sphere of influence, are confronted with these problems and are supposed to find answers to these complex questions. This always has to be considered against the backdrop of time and personnel resources as well as the general framework conditions within the destination.
Based on empirical research, this paper aims to present and discuss a superior framework for the takeover of responsibility within a destination and thus to contribute to the conceptual analysis of the future viabilty of the tourism industry in general as well as on a destination level in particular. The paper begins with a scientific approach to the discussion of selected challenges in a touristic context and presents resilience as a suitable approach to the active and strategic consideration of these challenges. It focuses on the understanding of resilience within destinations in order to provide a tourism-specific use of the term. The central tasks of a destination management organization (DMO) are embedded in the context of leadership structures and management responsibility. Subsequently, the concept of destination network responsibility (DNR) is presented as an approach to take responsibility within tourism destinations. This serves as the basis for empirical research, which discusses the questions considered as relevant in a qualitative survey with central persons responsible for DMOs in Bavaria/Germany. The results are regarded within the theoretical-conceptual framework and are finally discussed with regard to leadership, resilience and responsibility.

2. Perspectives on tourism development and destination management

2.1 Tourism development on a regional scale

Traveling has become an everyday phenomenon of our time, with constantly increasing numbers and frequency worldwide. With 459.6m, respectively, 94.4m overnight-stays, Germany and Bavaria reached all-time high records in 2017 (Destatis, 2018; Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik, 2018). This has consequences for the supply and demand sides, and the living space where tourism occurs (Lee, 2013; Mihalič, 2014; Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Welford et al., 1999). A good example of these consequences can be found within the scientific discussion on the topic of carrying capacity in the context of tourism (Kennell, 2016; Mansfeld, 1992; Saarinen, 2006). This concept describes a critical threshold, which represents a community’s ability to tolerate negative social effects of tourism development (Mansfeld, 1992) and has been stimulating a discussion toward new developments in sustainable tourism. This threshold is difficult to define, however, and can rather be felt than clearly examined via a strictly defined maximum-number (Coccossis, 2017).

Looking from the demand side, a professional and high-quality tourism offer has to deal with the fact that more and more tourists are increasingly experienced and demanding travelers. For business and leisure travel and for all different target groups, offers have developed in tourism regions and places. These offers are successfully marketed if they can provide the traveler with a unique experience. This usually requires product development in an inter-organizational network (Pechlaner et al., 2006; Weiermair, 2006). With regard to the travel experience of a guest, the journey starts already before the trip: in the course of information on the destination’s attractions and facilities, the selection and booking of products and services and in the review of the voyage (Clawson and Knetesch, 1967). In current terms, this dynamic process can also be regarded in the context of the so-called customer journey (Horster, 2015). There is a wide range of requirements for the service providers and decision-makers involved in the overall offer for the guest, since there are a number of possible factors that can affect a harmonious travel experience, which are important to identify (Hoarau and Kline, 2014; Kamargianni and Matyas, 2017). Examples for these factors are in the field of mobility, innovative products/services and a vital guest-host-relationship.

In addition to this demand-side perspective, tourism can also be regarded from a geographical point of view: the destination can be seen as a spatial entity where touristic supply and demand encounter each other (Dredge, 1999; Sainagni, 2006), based on the physical and social resources available within the destination. It contains all necessary facilities for accommodation, catering, entertainment and employment and therefore encompasses the competition unit in incoming tourism. From the supply-side perspective, this subsequently leads to necessity, in the context of tourism destinations, to bundle the various supply of service providers into a consistent touristic product (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014). However, the definition of a touristic destination presented above neglects some current changes and transformations that should be included in a socio-cultural and geographical point of view. With regard to current developments in tourism, such as recent debates on overcrowding and overtourism, it can be asserted that nowadays the differences between a touristic destination and the living space within the destination are becoming more blurred.
2.2 Challenges and assets of successful tourism development

Different scenarios for the successful design and development of a product or a service are often based on a strategic management discussion. Some of the investigations within the strategic management perspective focus on a resource-based view while others highlight a market-based view (Barney, 1991; Teece et al., 1997; Wernerfelt, 1984). These have later been discussed in relation to tourism development (Pechlaner et al., 2006; Peters et al., 2011). Further approaches emphasize the need to consider and develop specific competencies, which become core competences if they arise within a network and if they are difficult to imitate due to their unique combination of natural and human resources (Dyer and Singh, 1998; Prahalad and Hamel, 2006). These core competences are seen as a crucial source for the competitiveness in relation to other destinations (Denicolai et al., 2010; Pechlaner et al., 2006).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the design and establishment of an attractive touristic offer is an ongoing process, which should be constantly revitalized and reshaped by an interplay between the tourist services and decision makers (Liu, 2003; McDonald, 2009). Subsequently, meta-competences are discussed, which can be considered success factors for a destination. Taking this into account, the following categories can be formed with regard to the basic requirements for a successful destination:

- On-topic information: the communication between service providers and the guest, as well as between the DMO and the guest, given a combination of the right information and the appropriate communication of information, is at stake more than ever. These requirements are fueled massively by the megatrend of digitization and also question relevant values, such as trust and reliability (Law et al., 2014; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013; Sørensen and Jensen, 2015).

- Hospitality: treating the guest in an appreciative and hospitable manner and taking the guest’s current state of affairs into account is crucial for a positive tourism experience. However, this relationship is no one-way street. There are scientific investigations that focus on guest-host relationships. Excessive demands toward the host have to be avoided and possible challenges must be considered in so-called hospitality management. A competent handling of this issue at the destination level is essential to secure the long-term acceptance of tourism among the population of the region, which can be expressed by a certain attitude toward tourism (Pechlaner et al., 2016; Stylidis et al., 2014; Tasci and Severt, 2017).

- Safety and security: against the backdrop of a latent terrorist threat and a focus on the issue of security in general, the convincingly organized and communicated guarantee of safety and security becomes a central prerequisite for the destination. This is no longer the case solely in the environment of known crises and conflict places of this world, but also in cities and regions that have so far been classified as safe. Especially at large events, where many people gather, this basic human need must be addressed appropriately by security and communication concepts. A balance has to be found between a desired freedom of movement and the possible necessity of control. The reconstruction of border controls in parts of Central Europe reflects this ongoing discussion (Bac et al., 2015; Ghaderi et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2004; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998; Tarlow, 2014).

- Future orientation: in times of economic success and in the absence of concrete threat scenarios, tourism actors must also be willing to deal with abstract future issues and to initiate a change process before negative developments take effect. Against the backdrop of the uncertainty of future developments, flexibility in the planning of projects is required (Pfarr et al., 2014; Hall, 2008). In this context, Phillips and Moutinho (2014) also tackle research deficits with regard to the strategic debate about future planning in tourism. A “precautionary principle” in tourism is described by Fennell (2015), who suggests handling destination management and destination development with caution by building awareness among all relevant stakeholders.

The studies mentioned above deal with these aspects and partially use best practice examples to provide insight into the successful handling of the respective challenges. The present study claims to deal with the critical factors for success for destination management. This happens for two reasons: first, while there are similar challenges in tourism development, each destination will have different impacts due to site-specific resource allocation and the unique local constellation of actors. Generally valid statements can only be derived with great difficulty from an individual case study.
Directly applicable recommendations for action are usually only possible for the respective study area. Second, it is expected that different challenges within a destination will be tackled on the basis of superior competences and attitudes. If tourism plays an economically significant role in a region, these superordinate competences are reflected in an organizational anchoring.

As a consequence of the circumstances described above, especially in Europe and therefore also in Bavaria, most destinations are under the influence of a so-called DMO, which deals with “destination management [...] as an over-arching process or approach which addresses the need to manage the diverse facets of a destination” (Pearce, 2015, p. 2). Subsequently, a DMO is responsible for strategic leadership as well as for the task of ensuring collective agency toward shared goals among the various service providers and stakeholders (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Flagestad and Hope, 2001; Sainaghi, 2006).

Since this first definition and description is still quite general, various aspects can be added in order to describe a DMO’s function more precisely. According to Pearce (2015), a DMO’s central task is the function of marketing, branding and positioning of the related tourism destination, for example the implementation of the classic marketing mix or the well-known four marketing P’s (Crouch, 2007): product, price, place and promotion (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). A second central task is relationship building and coordination, where a DMO is supposed to have a key role within the destination, which is followed by product development as another important function. This is embedded into the planning and formulation of a strategy and, related to this, the monitoring and evaluation of itself. With regard to aspects of sustainability, resource stewardship is elementary for preserving ecological, social and cultural resources (Pearce, 2015). In this field, Crouch (2007, p. 31) suggests that the key to this is the development of a so-called “caring mentality.” Considering human resource development, knowledge as a resource plays a central role with regard to competitive advantages, which needs to be expanded and strengthened within the framework of the tourism destination. The DMO’s function of visitor management should be regarded against the backdrop of a possible strong growth in visitor numbers (Crouch, 2007; Pearce, 2015). In such a case, measures are needed to influence the flow of guests. As a consequence, a preventive action of the DMO is recommended, which presupposes statutory requirements and official behavior. With regard to the people that live in the destination, a further function to be named is the enhancement of well-being of local residents (Pearce, 2015), since they are also users of touristic products/services in the destination, but are also exposed to eventual negative impacts of tourism (e.g. increased traffic volume) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1** Selected functions of destination management organizations (DMOs)

![Diagram showing selected functions of destination management organizations (DMOs)](image)

**Sources:** Own illustration, based on Pearce (2015)
2.3 Resilience as an approach in tourism development and destination management

Various challenges of tourism development in general and of DMOs in particular have been described in the previous pages. Furthermore, it has already been indicated that a strategic and systematic analysis of the critical success factors of tourism development is difficult, but necessary. A discussion that deals with such questions from different perspectives and that has been attracting considerable scientific and practical attention for several years has been based on the resilience approach. Resilience is presented in the following section and is classified with regard to its already existing applications and understandings in tourism and destination management.

Whether in a social, ecological or economic context, systems and individuals are exposed to various crises at certain times, which have the potential to overbalance a person and to bring the system/individual toward existential threats. Such crises can be immediate, like in the case of a shock event, or they may arise out of continuous change processes, such as climate change and its impact on a regional scale (Biggs, 2011). In practice, some systems or individuals successfully overcome the crises affecting them, while others remain permanently under a negative influence. The context-dependent factors that make a system or individual resistant to crises or enable them to subsist are characterized in scientific research as resilience factors (Folke, 2006; Holling, 1973; Magis, 2010). A system may have a higher or a lower level of resilience, depending on the extent to which the relevant factors are present. The resilience approach has been applied in many different disciplines since the 1960s, such as in psychology (individual resilience), socio-ecology (ecosystem-resilience), or in economics (organizational resilience). In these fields, the understanding of resilience developed differently, which makes it hard to presuppose a universal definition for further research (Brand and Jax, 2007).

Nevertheless, two essential characteristics can be identified: an individual or a system is understood as resilient when they oppose crises without a significant impact and when strategies are developed to change their structure in such a way that they can adapt and prosper within the conditions changed by the crisis (Haines, 2009).

Notably economics and spatial science add a further aspect to the above-mentioned initial definitions of resilience. A proactive understanding of the resilience approach is introduced. Resilience has therefore to be seen not only from a crisis and post-crisis perspective, but as an ability to proactively prepare for unexpected and unpredictable future challenges (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2011). Thereby, practical resilience research is not only about solving technical problems, but also about gaining relevance from a strategic management perspective to influence the development of organizations, regions, or, as in this case, tourism destinations.

Resilience from an actor’s perspective. For a resilient region, it is not enough to be economically successful at a specific moment in time. Resilient regions maintain this economic success over a longer period and they continue striving even during inevitable adaptation requirements due to exogenously induced conversion processes (Christopherson et al., 2010). According to Hudson (2010), this adaptability can be understood as the joint ability of stakeholders to actively work on resilience within their sphere of influence. Thus, resilience is not a fate, but the result of a well-functioning spatial network that works together based on common goals (Bristow, 2010).

Berkes (2007, pp. 287-8) identifies four core characteristics that actors within a region must have in order to systematically build resilience: “(1) learning to live with change and uncertainty, (2) nurturing diversity in its various forms, (3) combining different types of knowledge for learning, and (4) creating opportunity for self-organization and cross-scale linkages.” These characteristics are on the agenda for tourism and destination development.

Resilience and tourism on a spatial level. The tourism industry is exposed to a variety of prevailing or developing crises and is fated to find answers to these questions in a professional manner. When it comes to a regional level of tourism development, there is a variety of different stakeholders, whose understanding of future challenges and crisis sometimes comes from highly subjective perspectives. This, for example, imposes double requirements on the tourism entrepreneurs within the destination. They must, at the same time, secure the operational performance of their firm, and dedicate a part of their time to actively develop cooperation projects in the tourism network.
In fact, there is a vital discussion in tourism literature about the industry-related application of the resilience approach (Hall, 2017; Lew and Cheer, 2018). From a theoretical point of view, the main issues deal with the elaboration of an understanding of resilience in a tourism context. It is important to map the dynamics and interrelations of actors, organizations and systems in a complex tourism ecosystem. Different authors attempt to present destination resilience in the form of models in order to show how to achieve a higher level of resilience (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008). However, these attempts are often unspecific, since cause and effect relationships in the overall destination system are hardly considered or the concrete practical orientation is missing (Calgaro et al., 2014). Thus, gaining knowledge in the area of destination resilience is achieved by considering specific questions in different types of destinations. Tyrrell and Johnston (2008), for example, contribute to the understanding of resilience by discussing variables of destinations that are relevant for their resilience, such as the size. Within the destination, resilience is discussed both on an organizational and spatial level, and responses need to be found on both levels (Lew and Cheer, 2018). Thus, questions of destination as well as organizational development are addressed and issues of regional planning are of high importance (Lew, 2018). Growing tourism enterprises within a spatial unit are more resilient to economic crises than are companies in a downturn (Martin, 2011). Strickland-Munro et al. (2010) demand a concretization of the sustainability discussion in tourism via the help of the resilience approach. In their view, a resilience discussion is suitable for developing forms of control that make a concrete contribution to destination development against the backdrop of dynamically changing framework conditions.

However, a conscious and well-considered use of destination resilience requires a largely consensual understanding, which has not yet been observed in the existing literature. On the one hand, some authors stress the parallels of tourism destinations with ecosystems and the socio-ecological understanding of resilience (Cumming et al., 2015; Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). On the other hand, Hall (2017) states in his literature review that contrary to these theoretical considerations of a socio-ecological paradigm, the applied tourism-related resilience research focuses on an understanding that emphasizes the resistance and robustness of tourism systems to crisis and catastrophic events. In order to define relevant criteria and indicators for an assessment of destination resilience and to derive responsibilities, the resilience understanding at a destination level needs to be clarified.

So far, an integrated resilience approach as far as tourism research is concerned remains a rather theoretical concept (Becken, 2013), which experienced operationalization only in clearly defined contexts even in recent literature (Lew and Cheer, 2018). Examples for this are studies on:

- adaptation strategies to climate change in ski resorts (Luthe et al., 2012; Ooi, 2018);
- retrospective considerations of disaster events, such as post-earthquake recovery (Oliva and Lazzaretto, 2017; Orchiston and Higham, 2016); and
- ecosystem resilience of nature-based tourism offers, such as coastal regions (Biggs et al., 2015; Larsen et al., 2011).

To overcome a fragmentary and case-study related use of the resilience concept, systematic resilience research in tourism should be highlighted. Hall et al. (2017) try to develop an integrative understanding of resilience in tourism by discussing the individual, organizational and destination levels. The analysis of resilience within our research builds on these dimensions. It does so with a focus on DMOs as key players in community-based destinations. Furthermore, public authorities are equally important as central organization units for the active establishment of resilience in destinations. They have a coordinating role in regional development in general and tourism development in particular.

Regulatory framework conditions and policy can build a frame to create synergy effects (Lew, 2014; Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). Resilience out of a DMO’s perspective should therefore be understood as a strategy that does not focus on short-term adaptation and solutions for limited audiences in the context of change, but rather favors long-term solutions as part of integrating regional challenges and needs (Lapointe and Sarrasin, 2018; Prayag, 2017).
Ultimately, however, resilience means both: determination and leadership in the occurrence of unexpected crisis events, as well as strategic thinking in complex contexts and the willingness to adopt inclusive and long-term solutions (Orchiston and Espiner, 2018). This raises the question of whether individual actors can fuel this process via leadership skills.

2.4 Leadership

In order to foster resilience development within a destination, one crucial point is the existence of one or more strong leaders (Cochrane, 2010; Walker et al, 2006). With regard to the role and competences of a leader, the leadership concept seems to be a suitable approach to describe these circumstances and interconnections. Against the backdrop of “dynamic, uncertain and complex” environments (Hitt and Ireland, 2002, p. 3; see also Hinterhuber and Popp, 1992; Pechlaner et al., 2006), strategic leadership can be “defined as a person’s ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization” (Ireland and Hitt, 1999, p. 43). According to Michael and Lochrie (2010, p. 37), this ability can, in many cases be seen “[...] as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions.” This crucial role of leadership in the context of institutional success or failure raises the question about which competences a person should combine in order to be a “leader”.

According to Hitt et al. (2010), eight different competences can be described here (see Figure 2): first of all, a leader has to be able to develop a clear vision, which then should be communicated broadly. Especially the latter can be seen as guidance to help with both the formation and implementation of strategies in order to achieve the vision. Such guidance is regarded as important for establishing the direction of the organization’s growth, its products and its markets in order to reach the envisaged targets (Hitt et al., 2010). A second competence is to build dynamic core competencies, which can be seen as a major capability to perform central tasks contributes to the competitive advantage of organizations. Supplemented by the term “dynamic”, such a “[...] dynamic core competence implies that the firm continues to develop and update the competence to be the leader, or at the forefront, in that capability” (Hitt et al., 2010, p. 439). The term “dynamic” also implies that organizations should be prepared to develop new competences if necessary in order to maintain advantages or to build new ones. As a third competence, a leader should be able to emphasize and effectively use human capital, since qualified human capital can be regarded as a crucial factor for the success of an organization. Additionally,
a strategic leader should also invest in the development of new technologies, which includes the search for new technologies, their internal development and/or their external obtainment. With specific regard to the tourism industry, technologies can somehow be replaced by the term products/services here. A fifth competence is to engage in valuable strategies, implying the exploitation of new strategies/market opportunities, the engagement in cooperative strategies and the use of an integrated differentiation strategy. Moreover, a leader should also develop and implement balanced controls. This can, for example, be helpful in order to manage finances, and also to influence and guide actions in an appropriate manner. With regard to such control efforts, effective leadership establishes a mechanism that facilitates a flexible, innovative employee spirit, which in consequence helps an organization to maintain and/or achieve competitive advantages. Last but not least, leadership also contains the ability to engage in ethical practices, since leaders play a critical role in establishing practices and values, such as honesty, trust and integrity in the decision-making process within the institution (Hitt et al., 2010, p. 439). Many of these aspects correlate with a proactive resilience understanding. These two approaches therefore have the potential to stimulate each other.

Leadership and tourism. Various publications point out that leadership is also a current issue with regard to tourism and destination development (Blichfeldt et al., 2014; Haven-Tang and Jones, 2012; Hristov and Zehrer, 2015; Kozak et al., 2014; McGeehe et al., 2015; Zehrer et al., 2014), since “appropriate leadership is [described as] essential in destination planning and management, due to the heterogeneity and complexity of destination stakeholder relations” (Kennedy and Augustyn, 2014, p. 187). In this field, the proactive shaping of tourism destinations can be seen as destination leadership, which “is about motivating, encouraging and inspiring human actors by setting long-term values and directions” (Pechlaner et al., 2014). One central actor in this field is the DMO (Blichfeldt et al., 2014; Hristov and Zehrer, 2015); however, leadership in destinations is not limited only to them, since the DMO needs suitable ambassadors and followers of articulated visions and ideas. Therefore, a wider network of actors within the destination is at stake, which includes politics (Bowen et al., 2017) and tourism business (Ryan et al., 2012).

The normative values presented in Figure 2 should be made use of both by the destination managers and his/her employees in order to be clearly understood and be visible within the decisions and actions of the DMO’s members. It can be assumed that value orientations in leadership are spread from the DMO toward other stakeholders within the destination. To discuss this from a conceptual point of view, a value-oriented management perspective of organizations can be helpful. In this field, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) gained importance in recent years for tourism destinations and enterprises.

2.5 Destination network responsibility

With regard to CSR, tourism-related research dealt mainly with the implementation of the concept within the general corporate level and in specific industry sectors (Argandoña, 2010; Bode, 2010; Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2008; Dwyer et al., 2007; Font and Walmsley, 2012; Inoue and Lee, 2011; Kalisch, 2002; Luck and Bowcott, 2010; Lund-Durlacher, 2012; Williams et al., 2007; Willers and Kilk, 2011). Despite the fact that tourism is a network industry par excellence, there is a lack of studies focusing on an exploration of the impact the integration of CSR at the meso-level of a destination network could have. Critical thinking in CSR research should rely on pertinent logics, but should also add alternative forms of organizational contexts for CSR (Coles et al., 2013). This is especially relevant for traditional destinations, like Bavaria, that are dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which work together in the so-called virtual service company in order to continually create a service bundle for the guests (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014). CSR in tourism can be seen as an valuable tool regarding sustainable destination development (Camilleri, 2014).

Petersik et al. (2017) analyzed and discussed to what extent the concept of CSR can be transferred from the individual enterprise level to the network level of the destination and which conditions and processes are connected. Particular interest has been paid to the identification of the potentials, which can emerge from a systematic CSR network approach in a tourism destination. In addition, relevant fields of action and expected challenges in the context of the
establishment and activation of a destination-wide responsibility network were elaborated. In the following, the main results of the investigation are summarized:

■ The CSR of tourism enterprises in SME-dominated destinations is characterized by a multi-dimensional character. This situation results from the cooperation of various actors in the virtual service company. Although the individual protagonist in this construct remains independent, he/she uses shared resources, such as the natural environment, the destination brand or collective skills, and is highly dependent on them (Hankinson, 2009; Huybers and Bennett, 2003). In this context, tourism enterprises do not only bear a responsibility for the processes in their own core businesses, but are also indirectly responsible for the behavior of the entire destination network.

■ The destination cannot only be understood as a spatial competition unit, which competes for visitors and guests, investments in attraction points, strategic alliances, limited budgets for marketing and product development or competitive enterprises (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014), but can also be considered to be a network responsibility unit. In this unit, various levels of responsibility are inextricably linked. The starting point of the chain of responsibility is the personal responsibility of individuals. It goes on to the responsibility of entire companies and industry sectors and ultimately leads to an overall responsibility of the tourism industry in a destination (Argandoña, 2010).

■ Just as individual CSR activities of an enterprise do not mean that the whole company acts in a responsible and sustainable manner, the same can also be applied to tourism destinations. If tourism development is supposed to become responsible and sustainable, a holistic approach is needed. The partial assumption of responsibility of individual tourism enterprises within the network in terms of the execution of their individual CSR falls too short, because only a selective or project-related effect emerges from it (Frey and George, 2008). As a solution to such a problem, a strategic network approach should be applied.

The main result can be seen in the constitution of the DNR concept (see Figure 3). It can be aligned with a development of resilience understanding and, later, with resilience building. This approach can be understood as an integrated concept of responsibility, which supports holistic CSR of the virtual service company destination in terms of sustainable tourism development. While CSR refers to the individual responsibility of a tourism enterprise within the destination network, DNR describes the responsibility of the destination network regarding the virtual service company.

Based on approaches from site management (Schär, 2008; Scherer, 2005), four main levels of such an integrated responsibility approach can be identified. The vision provides the direction regarding the development of cooperation within the responsibility network and is ideally generated by the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders. On the normative level, mission statements and objectives regarding the commitment must be specified. Here, the development
of a place and network-specific resilience understanding is useful. On the strategic level, it is important to define integrative responsibility strategies, thereby bringing the formulated model to life and achieving the intended objectives. Finally, the operational level is responsible for the development and implementation of appropriate engagement measures (Scherer, 2005). Resilience building should, in this phase, be seen as a consequence of an agreed resilience understanding. All four levels are directly dependent on each other, are influenced by existing norms and values in the destination and require permanent feedback processes as well as an overall evaluation (Schär, 2008). The result of such responsibility networking is more than the sum of its activities, since multiple beneficial effects can emerge from them. The latter arise both within the micro level of the company, the meso level within the destination network as well as within the macro level outside the network of a tourism destination (Battaglia et al., 2010).

On the macro level, benefits of CSR networking emerge as individual commitment is multiplied many times and thus its efficiency significantly increased. The destination as a whole is perceived as a responsible acting entity from the outside. From the perspective of network internal relations of the destination (meso level), such a cooperative approach prevents certain problems within a destination to not be counteracted, as nobody feels responsible for them. In a networked cooperation, a common understanding of problems and possible crisis scenarios among all protagonists in the destination exists. Additionally, the unnecessary waste of important resources is avoided, whether through double structures or the lack of full exploitation of internal network resources. At the level of individual companies (micro level), CSR networking can be regarded as a fundamental tool to overcome frequently associated barriers, such as costs and complexity, and in this way can help implement CSR systematically.

The intensive discussion of the presented concepts and approaches form the basis for the empirical survey. In the following, the methodical approach as well as the obtained results will be presented.

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the goal of this research, a qualitative survey was undertaken by conducting six open expert interviews with destination managers from different urban and rural destinations in Bavaria, Germany. The interviewees were chosen to obtain an overview of different situations, attitudes and challenges affecting tourism both in rural and urban destinations. They had to describe their role as destination managers within the destination and name relevant topics with regard to tourism development. They were also asked about their perception of responsibility with regard to tourism development, as well as leadership within this field and the question about which actors constitute leadership figures. In a third step, the resilience approach was explained and the interviewees had to explain their opinions on resilience in tourism development from three perspectives: the first being resilience within a destination, followed by resilience with regard to a DMO and resilience regarding a destination manager. In general, the discussion of all three interview parts started with an open question in order to avoid guiding the interview partners in their answers. During the overall interview, the interview partners pointed out possible interrelations and perspectives of the concepts discussed.

The interviews were evaluated by using the qualitative method GABEK® (Ganzheitliche Bewältigung von Komplexität/Holistic Coping with Complexity) and the accompanying software WinRelan®, which explains the desired openness of the interviews: based on detailed responses, the method makes it possible to represent normal language verbal data in the form of complex linguistic conceptual networks by reducing complexity. Based on specific interview passages, relevant keywords can be identified and coded by using WinRelan®. These keywords can then be represented graphically in the form of network graphs, which contain the relationships and linkages between the keywords (see Figure 4).

In order to emphasize and highlight specific topics within the network graphs, one can put dotted circles around specific keywords and subsume these circles under a thematic headline. Such circles and headlines added by the authors in the following network graphs are the result of both intensive work with GABEK® respective WinRelan® and a profound examination and content knowledge of the interview transcripts.
At the same time, GABEK® is also suitable for modeling cooperation relationships in the context of regional and destination development on the basis of joint solutions. As a result of a lexical coding, connections in the sum of all conversational statements can be shown. By means of the associated WinRelan® software, these conceptual networks can be reduced in complexity, the semantic connections can be disclosed and finally presented visually in the form of association graphics (Pechlaner and Volgger, 2012).

4. Findings

In the following, the central results of the interview statements are presented and discussed with the help of network graphs. This is achieved on the basis of three perspectives in the presentation of results: first, the understanding of resilience in the context of destinations and DMOs will be thematized, followed by a discussion of the associations toward responsibility. Finally, the role of leadership and the destination manager and his or her abilities will be addressed.

4.1 Understanding resilience in the context of destinations and DMOs

As is visible from the interviewees’ results, destinations have several unique characteristics that jointly contribute to their resilience. Three major perspectives have been derived in that context (see Figure 5). First, the resilience level of a destination is determined by some basic prerequisites, such as the general acceptance of tourism among inhabitants. The present discussion about overcrowding and overtourism in many destinations reflects these issues. A challenge lies with the fact that crises in the context of destination development are difficult to measure and are rather abstract as a management tool, since defined parameters are missing. Nevertheless, the interview partners see clear areas where resilience
building in destinations can be fostered. These are so-called “soft” factors, such as a high level of mutual trust and communication. Anticipatory thinking, as another example, is seen as a competence to ensure successful tourism development in the long run. These visualized results presented above can furthermore be underlined by the following interview quotation of one destination manager:

[Destinations should] also recognize that in times of growth or positive development, one thinks that the trees do not grow into the sky and that, as already mentioned in the Bible, there are also seven meager years to come. And in the seven fat years, you also have to think about the time afterwards every day.

These “soft” factors need to go along with some “hard” factors that have to be fulfilled in a destination context on the other side. Future-oriented investments in products and infrastructure from both the private and public sides are crucial for resilience. Policy tools, such as funding programs or a definition of quality standards, are important, too. Politics have a particular responsibility in the setting of framework conditions.

When destination managers think about the strategic development of resilience on a destination level, they consider the resilience of the DMO on an organizational level as a crucial part (see Figure 6). The resilience of a DMO can be analyzed separately from destination resilience, but there are clear content-related and logical connections. A central prerequisite for destination development promoting resilience is the positive reputation of the DMO among inhabitants and in politics. In a resilient destination, the work of the DMO is generally assessed more positively, the political support for its work is higher and the general scope of action to set up central strategies for the future-oriented design of the destination increases:

If the destination goes well, then the DMO is also good. We have reached a very good standing in our political environment and with our shareholders, without much discussion about the work itself.

Thanks to a high level of trust, the DMO has the opportunity to implement forward-looking destination development. To make the right decisions, it is seen as crucial to perform a consistent target group analysis and market research. The financial resources that are made available to the DMO by public and private parties play an essential role. In the sense of a resilient DMO, it is crucial to have different sources of funding to finance one’s own work. In the event of the loss of a resource, for example, the withdrawal of an important member, compensation can be provided by an existing diversified group of supporters. Destination managers need to develop creative income possibilities, such as additional services for private companies with regard to additional marketing and distribution channels.
Last but not least, the skills of the DMO’s own personnel plays an important role in creating a resilient organizational structure. Destination managers are required to cleverly choose personnel, to offer apprenticeships and to train employees in further education measures.

4.2 Responsibility: a destination manager’s view and influencing factors

With regard to the question of who is responsible in the field of tourism (see Figure 7), the results show that this topic is first and foremost a community task instead of an individual one, as the following quotation of one destination manager underlines:

“You cannot define a single responsible person who is responsible for all areas. This is not possible in a destination.

Relevant actors in this stakeholder community are placed in local tourism associations, but also in other organized institutions, such as in a hotel association. On the one hand, the responsible

![Figure 6](image-url) Network graph: “how is resilience regarded from a DMO's perspective?”

![Figure 7](image-url) Network graph: “who is responsible? A destination manager’s perspective”

...
community itself consists of cooperation between public (e.g. a board for urban respective regional economic development) and political actors (the cities’ mayors or the regions’ heads of district authority). On the other hand, this community consists also of cooperation between privately organized tourism stakeholders, who bundle target group-specific interests, and the touristic service providers themselves, such as mobility or accommodation providers. Even though the responsibility for tourism is, above all, a joint task, the DMO, and even more the responsible destination manager in the sense of leadership, are key figures who set impulses for this community work.

Regarding the influencing factors of responsibility in the field of tourism development, the results show a three-way split consisting of inter-organizational aspects, frameworks and strategic aspects and the role of the leader (see Figure 8). With regard to framework and strategic aspects, it is important to communicate clear guidelines and long-term visions for the destination, which are in most cases developed by the destination manager as a leader:

Continuity: I cannot change my strategy every year, not every two or three years, but I have to define a strategy for ten or twelve years in my network. I can rework it, again and again, but a common thread has to be agreed upon, otherwise I will discuss our goals and visions in each session.

Within this context, one crucial point is to see the employees as a resource and to cultivate a mindful approach with them:

I see myself as an employer, with the duty of caring for the workers: We see this also because we know that the employee is a sensitive good, and good employees are not lining up outside. We do not just want to try this through financial incentives, because that is just a short-term incentive, but through good atmosphere, good cooperation, a mindfulness, a respectful, good relationship in the team.

Leadership and the person of the destination manager. Although the results presented so far emphasized the joint assumption of responsibility and the interaction of important actors in the construction of a resilient destination, the interview statements underline the role of certain leaders in this context (see Figure 9). The development and implementation of strategies requires a certain amount of authority and related motivational skills, which have to be used in a reflected manner:

It’s not about who is the head, it is about who succeeds to lead a group of people to have a balance between grassroots democracy and a decent level of authority in this group of people. Otherwise we cannot get on.

**Figure 8** Network graph: “responsibility in tourism development: influencing factors”
In practice, it is necessary to defend well-intentioned concepts and ideas through consistent persuasion, even in the case of resistance. The leading role in the cross-industry field of tourism, however, extends to other groups of actors: the region, politics and service providers:

The economy, the politics and the tourism managers should assume leadership and then pass it on. This must then be received and implemented by system partners, such as hoteliers, suppliers, restaurateurs.

Nonetheless, the interview results indicate that within this leadership network, a central leadership figure is required, usually represented as a destination manager:

My mission is to bundle all the actors and their budgets to create together with them one or many tourist products. […] And this has to be done inclusively, so that the groups which act in these guiding products act together, that they act in a targeted way and present the entire product as best as possible.

The destination managers recognize their key roles within the destination as well as the characteristics of this role (see Figure 10). Successful destination managers are experienced experts and observers of their own industry, the knowledge of which requires appropriate education. Newcomers from other industries do not have it easy and need to gain the necessary experience and associated network over time:

Yes, you have to give impulses. You have to understand tourist trends and maybe, if you are lucky, set new trends, but I think that is rather difficult for a rather small rural tourism region. You have to see trends that are there, take them up in time and then also you have to win partners.

In addition to this subject-specific competence, a corresponding external appearance is essential. Here, the interfaces within the city or region must be identified and maintained. Only in this way the destination manager can succeed in providing the necessary persuasive work and in motivating the stakeholders to constructively support tourism development. If the destination manager succeeds in doing so, he/she becomes a key player and, to a certain extent, indispensable in matters of location and regional and tourism development – that is, in the co-creation of the living space:

He needs to build a good network with all those involved in tourism, in particular federal, state and urban politics, in order to be irreplaceable.

An enthusiastic outward appearance can only be secured permanently if the destination manager understands a balance between self-assured behavior and humility:

We have a key role through the constant flow of communication with the actors.
The results presented above underline responsibility within the field of destination development from destination managers’ perspectives. It becomes clear that responsibility is highly dependent on both participation and leadership. What is discussed as DNR from a conceptual perspective can be described as a balance between setting guidelines and listening to existing competencies in various fields. In the following, these results are discussed in a broader context regarding the concepts and approaches discussed in the beginning.

5. Discussion

The previous remarks and empirical findings demonstrate the confirmation of the DNR approach, no matter if in urban or in rural destinations. This is expressed in a field of tension, in which some actors or groups of actors assume more responsibility than others. In this context, reasonable leadership figures and roles emerge from the destination contexts. Within this specific leadership network, the respective destination manager stands out as a central leader, being exposed to a continuous interplay of direction (head of the team) and mediation (part of the team).

Looking at the research body, differences and similarities can be identified that express themselves in particular in the interaction with political and social groups of actors. In an urban context, the scope of action of the destination manager tends to be less developed. The implementation of strategies is influenced by the goodwill of the leading political actors. In practice, the mayor and the destination manager must stand side by side when it comes to the realization of larger tourism development projects. In a more rural context, the destination managers seem to have more room to maneuver, as the legitimacy of their work comes from political actors of different hierarchies. Hence, this presupposes that they are able to build consensus between different interest groups. As far as political influence is concerned, supra-regional political guidelines play a role as do instruments of regional planning at the regional level. Furthermore, the ideas of various mayors at the municipal level must be reconciled, also when it comes to a joint understanding of resilience. For this to succeed, the objectives of tourism development need to harmonize with the objectives of regional development in order to achieve strategic goals on a broad political basis. The responsibility of the destination manager at the urban level is rather expressed through a good relationship with key players in the city, whereas in a rural context the destination manager exercises his/her responsibility more intensively through his/her coordinating performance.
From the destination level to the level of the DMO, employees come into the focus of responsible tourism development. These are the key resources in building resilience, as they can identify problems and challenges at an early stage, due to their expertise and specific knowledge of the local situation. They must be enabled to articulate these observations in a trusting togetherness, so that the DMO and other relevant actors are willing to collaboratively work on a solution.

According to the understanding of destination managers, a high level of acceptance ultimately provides the fuel for a shared takeover of responsibility at the destination level. The importance of a high level of acceptance for tourism is illustrated by the fact that, in the end, destinations are more than ever the result of a co-creation of tourists and local residents. In the face of the described carrying capacity, the topic of overtourism, which deals with the search for solutions to a “perceived too much” in tourism, is currently being discussed as a central challenge in tourism development. Therefore, the resilience of a destination becomes clear, since overtourism brings with it both the danger of dissatisfaction among guests and the local population. It is likely that such developments in tourism catalyze discussions about the resilience approach among responsible in DMOs.

In this context, it can be said that responsibility is divided between several entities, but key actors are necessary. The destination manager is the most central figure, especially in order to persuade the private sector to participate in destination development. It has to be considered that private actors are the actual basis for tourism in a destination through their entrepreneurial performance. Only through a close exchange with, and an active participation by the private sector can the destination manager succeed in representing tourism development as a community task and developing credible visions and strategies.

With regard to the different levels of DNR, all can be embedded in the context of responsibility on the way to a resilient destination. The destination manager, as a key figure, is initially responsible for developing and communicating long-term visions for tourism development together with the relevant employees. He/she can also be an initiator of a common resilience understanding in the destination. At a normative level, this leads to the formulation and development of an associated strategy in close exchange with the relevant actors. On an operational level, the active communication and vivid presentation of the common path by the destination manager to the service providers form the basis for the consistent implementation of a long-term strategy.

5.1 Perspectives for future research

Considering these observations and results, there are some promising starting points for further research. It has been shown that the role of the destination manager is and remains central: first, on a destination level with regard to the formation of responsibility takeover and the building of resilience understanding in the actor network and second on an organizational level within the DMO when it comes to human resource management and development. He or she quickly reaches limitations if involvement of central actors is not achieved. The consideration of the research topic with regard to a concept of shared leadership (see, e.g. Pearce and Conger, 2002) could therefore provide further information for the practical implementation of shared responsibility at the destination level. Much research has been done on organizational development in for-profit and non-profit-organizations. Further studies should also consider traditional and recent research in this field concerning possible reference points in a DMO context in order to make DMO-work more effective.

Overall, it should be noted that due to the unique situation and actor constellation within most European destinations, a corresponding destination-specific consideration should be the subject of future research. Through this path of in-depth analysis, further insights into the conceptual development of DNR can be gained.

The resilience approach in light of tourism destinations and their protagonists illustrates the necessity to develop collaborative, anticipatory and proactive skills and concepts for the future in a highly complex setting of increasingly fierce competition. The implied holistic responsibility perception of the destination network is certainly not to be regarded as a cure-all for the success of a destination and its stakeholders, as it in no way replaces the need to offer high-quality, innovative products and services at an adequate price-performance ratio to the guest. Nevertheless, it is and will increasingly become a success factor in the orchestra of competencies of both urban and rural destinations and in a world of transformation.
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The impact of cultural values and economic constraints on tourism businesses’ ethical practices

Heather Skinner

Abstract

Purpose – Anecdotal evidence suggests that in times of economic constraints particularly in countries such as Greece that have long been stereotyped as corrupt, business practices amongst small- and medium-sized organisations that make up the majority of these nations’ tourism operators may become less than ethical or legal. The purpose of this paper is to explore these issues empirically in order to understand the impact of both cultural values and economic constraints on tourism businesses’ practices.

Design/methodology/approach – An exploratory case study using mixed methods has been adopted. Quantitative data were gathered from tourism business owners, managers and employees via questionnaires to establish the nature and scope of various unethical, illegal or immoral practices. Qualitative data were gathered to explore the ways these issues are considered and enacted.

Findings – Results show that there are many unethical and illegal practices that have been witnessed first-hand. Businesses’ attempts at acting in an ethical and socially responsible manner tend to be affected by not only cultural issues, but also economic constraints, yet there remains a desire to act in a way that does not impact negatively on tourists or on the local society and environment.

Originality/value – This research fills a gap in the literature relating to the ethical stance and practices of tourism entrepreneurs. It also presents an original conceptualisation of these issues in light of their location within the extant literature on ethics, corporate social responsibility and both sustainable and responsible tourism.

Keywords Greece, Corporate social responsibility, Ethics, Sustainable tourism, Responsible tourism, Small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs)

Introduction

Many Mediterranean tourism destinations that experienced a mass tourism boom period starting in the 1960s that continued up until the late 1980s and early 1990s are now in the late maturity stage of their product life-cycle, with some entering the decline phase. These destinations face challenges that have been brought about due to fewer tourist arrivals and/or decreased tourism expenditure. For resorts, the high season is increasingly shorter than in previous years, resulting in decreased profits to local resorts and tourism enterprises (Buhalis, 2001; Knowles and Curtis, 1999; Panayiotopoulos et al., 2016, 2017; Skinner, 2014, 2017; Tsartas, 2003). In some of these countries businesses are also faced with meeting increased austerity measures. For example, in Greece, businesses are increasingly being required to respond to higher levels of taxation, newly introduced taxes and strict capital controls (Visvizi, 2016). These challenges are impacting particularly hard on businesses operating in coastal and island destinations in this region, where tourism is often the main and sometimes only source of income for many residents.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in times of economic constraints particularly in countries such as Greece that have long been stereotyped as corrupt, business practices amongst small- and medium-sized organisations that make up the majority of these nations’ tourism operators may
become less than ethical or legal. The aim of this paper is to explore these issues empirically in order to understand the impact of both cultural values and economic constraints on tourism businesses’ practices.

Against this background, this paper explores the following research questions:

RQ1. How do tourism enterprises perceive and enact social responsibility and ethical business behaviour?

RQ2. To what extent are tourism business ethical practices affected by cultural values?

RQ3. To what extent are tourism business ethical practices affected by economic constraints?

Through a focus on small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs) this research makes an important contribution to filling a gap in the literature focusing on issues relating to the ethical stance and practices of tourism entrepreneurs “who have not been commended for their ethical business conduct” (Power et al., 2017, p. 47). The results from this research, therefore, contribute to our understanding of individual responses to ethical issues in a cultural context by examining notions of behaviour and responsibility, thus, filling the gap in the literature identified by Buckley (2012).

Zanfardini, Simó and Alcañiz (2013) recognise the importance of both the natural and cultural heritage of the places within which tourism businesses operate. As their work was undertaken in Spain, they suggest that these issues could be explored in other cultural contexts, particularly as they can be seen to affect loyalty to a destination. The research has, therefore, been contextualised by gathering the empirical data on the Greek island of Corfu, one of the top 10 tourist destination in Greece (Greek City Times, 2016), yet one that continues to face challenges similar to other destinations across the Mediterranean.

Hildreth (2007, p. 229) has found an “increasing focus on the “functional city”’ which is connected to the wider city-region or sub-region of that city’s surroundings by “the ways that people live their lives between a city(s) and the towns and areas that surround it”, thus signifying the appropriateness of studying cities within the context of the wider city-region. The link between smaller cities and their wider regions can be seen to be of relevance to this research given that around 56 per cent of the European Union’s (EU) urban residents (which account for around 70 per cent of the entire EU population) live in small- and medium-sized towns (Servillo et al., 2017). A total of 38 per cent of the total EU population resides in small- and medium-sized cities (with populations of between 5,000–100,000), compared with only 30 per cent of the EU’s population residing in cities of over 100,000 people (Hamdouch et al., 2017). Corfu has a total permanent resident population of only just over 100,000, of whom around 30 per cent live in its only city. Many of the formal aspects of civic life on the island can be undertaken only in the city, and so residents have to travel into the city in order to, for example, transfer vehicle ownership, pay taxes, deal with telephone and internet service provision, and carry out their personal and business-related banking. The municipality’s main offices are located in the city (although there are smaller regional offices around the island, but many services can be performed only in the main city). As a tourist focused island, much of the island’s entertainment and social life takes place in the city too, as many of the island’s tourism resorts close outside of the tourist season and offer only very limited services for local residents throughout the winter months. The Municipal Theatre is located in the city, as is a ten-pin bowling centre, and many restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The island’s small size affords relatively easy access to the city for all of the island’s residents. On the other hand, many of the city’s residents who work in the tourism industry travel out of the city during the season to work, and some to reside, in the island’s tourism resorts. This typifies the conceptualisation of the territorial system relating to small- and medium-sized towns and cities as being part of both “urban and regional systems” and also linking with non-urban places (Sýkora and Mulček, 2017, p. 439), thus reinforcing Bell and Jayne’s (2009, p. 689) assertion that such smaller urban centres “can be more productively thought of in terms of influence and reach, rather than population size, density or growth”. This research can also, therefore, contribute to the body of knowledge of tourism ethics of SMTEs in small cities and urban regions in Greece who may face similar challenges to those businesses in Corfu.

In a tourism context, CSR can be seen to encompass responsibility, sustainability and ethics (Zanfardini, Aguirre and Tamagni, 2013). Yet despite increasing interest in such issues in a
tourism context these authors also stress that the literature on such issues remains sparse. Due to the broad theoretical underpinning of these topics, this research, therefore, also presents an original conceptualisation of these issues in light of their location within the extant literature on culture and tourism businesses, ethics and tourism businesses, corporate social responsibility, and responsible tourism and sustainability.

Literature review

A thorough consideration of business ethics per se is outside the scope of this paper (see Gaski, 1999; Hunt and Vitell, 1986, 1993 for a fuller consideration of the issues in a general marketing context). What is of relevance, and therefore what will be focused on in this paper, are considerations of both the deontological decisions behind SMTEs specific business practices, and the teleological evaluation of the consequences and impacts of these practices in a tourism context. Thus, cultural issues will also be considered, recognising that “there may be differing cultural perceptions of what is actually ‘ethical’ for a given society” (Skinner, 2005, pp. 263-4), as will economic issues, recognising the geographical context within which this research is being conducted.

Culture and tourism businesses

Successful organisational exchanges are those that are based on the shared values between parties to the exchange process (Maignan and McAlister, 2003). These include ethical considerations underpinning the “extent to which partners have beliefs in common about what behaviors, goals, and policies are important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p. 25). A socially responsible organisation is, therefore, one that displays an understanding of the common norms and shared values of all stakeholders. Thus, on the one hand “ethical principles are not subjective measures that vary with cultural, social, and economic conditions; they are objective statements that transcend countries, religions, and times. They are the basic rules or first principles that have been proposed to ensure a ‘good society’” (Hosmer, 1994, p. 20). However, on the other hand, it is becoming increasingly difficult for organisations to base the exchange process upon shared stakeholder values and norms when dealing with cross-cultural norms and values in heterogeneous globalised markets, and also to deal ethically in globalised markets when, “in a cross-cultural environment, marketers are exposed to different values and ethical norms” and are less able to rely on “universally accepted ethical norms” (Nill, 2003, p. 90). Individual responses into cultural contexts, values, behaviours and responsibility has been identified as one of the three areas of highest priority for further study into sustainable tourism (Buckley, 2012, p. 536) where research progress has been low. One of the challenges faced by organisations attempting to understand the complexity of ethics in a globalised environment is that while culture is seen to be “an important determinant of ethical beliefs” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 103), cultural similarity between markets does not always indicate ethical similarity in business relationships (Singhapakdi et al., 2001). While tourists may be motivated to travel to experience different places with different cultures and ways of living that are different from their day to day lives, which remains “central to most forms of tourist experience” (Williams and Lew, 2015, p. 12), even tourists from countries that may be perceived as culturally similar (e.g. from geographically close EU nations) may not share the same ethical stance as their hosts. One example of this is the attitude towards free-roaming dogs, of which there is an increasing number in tourist destinations and in Greek towns and cities since the economic crisis. Tourists from countries and cultures that perceive dogs to be indoor pets, even as a part of the family, may find it very uncomfortable and upsetting to see free-roaming street dogs, and stray cats, or abandoned puppies and kittens when visiting tourist destinations where cultural values and beliefs that inform approaches to animal welfare differ from their own (Moorhouse et al., 2016; Popescu et al., 2017).

Corfu has an expatriate population of around 10,000 more or less full-time residents, comprising around 10 per cent of the island’s total resident population. While the key source markets for tourism to the island remain the UK and Germany (Skinner, 2014), Corfu among many other Greek destinations is also favoured as a tourism destination by travellers from all over the world, including Greek domestic tourists travelling from the mainland. The city’s port is also very popular with cruise ships, and in 2018 Corfu town itself is estimated to attract 650,000 visitors from cruise
tourism alone (Enimerosi, 2018). Corfu, especially during the tourism season, is therefore highly multi-cultural, tourists visit from a wide range of different cultures and are served by people in tourism businesses from a wide range of cultures too. Increasingly tourism businesses are advertising for summer staff from various national groups, especially those able to speak the languages of their target customer markets. The island, therefore, also experiences an influx of resident workers from various different countries during the summer season.

Furthermore, while Corfu is now part of the Greek State, it has been so only since 1864. Prior to this, since the time of its first settlement in 734 BC, the island has been dominated by various cultures as it has been part of the Roman, Byzantine, Norman and Venetian Empires, it has been ruled by France, then Corfu fell to the Russians, then the Ottoman Empire, before France’s second occupation in 1807. The island’s culture is also heavily influenced by its time as a British Protectorate (1815–1864), and its geographical proximity not only to the Greek and Albanian mainland off its Eastern shores, but also to Italy to its West (Hopkins, 1977). Therefore, even tourists from the Greek mainland may find certain cultural differences when visiting the island. Yet Corfu does seem to share the same cultural stereotypes as the rest of Greece with regard to perceptions of corruption and poor business practices regarding legal compliance and business ethics that will be explored in more depth in the case study that follows.

**Ethics and tourism businesses**

SMTEs in general across this global industry, particularly with regard to issues of responsibility and sustainability, tend to be less well informed and able to access less information and resources than larger tourism businesses (Garay *et al.*, 2017). Yet, despite the prevalence of small- and medium-sized businesses operating across all sectors of the tourism industry (Garay *et al.*, 2017; Lashley and Rowson, 2010), there remains very limited research into the ethical practices of tourism entrepreneurs (Power *et al.*, 2017). Research by Power *et al.* (2017, p. 36) has sought to understand not only “the ontology of ethical entrepreneurship”, but also the mission, motives and virtues of ethical tourism entrepreneurs. However, while Power *et al.* (2017, p. 37) acknowledge previous research that claims in general “entrepreneurs are more ethical and socially responsible than most of the population” the constraints that may offer barriers to those operating SMTEs remains under-researched. The very “smallness” of these enterprises can lead to informality and flexibility of their operations, while also leading to difficulties enforcing regulations upon them (Power *et al.*, 2017). Thus, ethics and social responsibility here are seen as two separate but linked concepts. A virtuous entrepreneur will act ethically due to his or her own values and beliefs about what is right and what is wrong. The smallness of the business also allows the individual’s own ethics to drive their business practices more so than may be possible in larger organisations. Moreover, in its most simplistic sense, “virtuous” entrepreneurial behaviour is seen to be “connected to reward, whereas unethical behaviour is linked to punishment” (Power *et al.*, 2017, p. 38). In terms of social responsibility, while ethics may guide the deontological decisions made about how the SMTE will behave, one key finding of Power *et al.*’s (2017) research is that the ethical entrepreneurs they interviewed focus more on the future than on the present. This would seem to suggest that smaller businesses may take the teleological consequences of their actions and their responsibility to society into consideration more than larger tourism enterprises.

**Corporate social responsibility**

In a recent review of research issues relevant to sustainable tourism relating to the “mainstream commercial tourism industry” Buckley (2012, p. 529) identified private sector responses to such issues include self-regulation and CSR to be of high practitioner interest with high levels of research progress.

Sainaghi *et al.* (2017) acknowledge that some of the metrics used to assess performance management in the tourism industry include environmental management, ethics and corporate social responsibility. However, there has also been seen to be a “prioritisation of relatively mechanical measurements of professed CSR activities, over more deliberative discussions of what actually constitutes CSR” (Farrington *et al.*, 2017, p. 31). While understanding the difficulty
of enumerating and classifying CSR activities, especially as they would apply to the wide variety of businesses involved in tourism, to be genuinely considered as CSR, these activities should encompass the economic, legal and ethical expectations of society (Farrington et al., 2017). These activities should also go voluntarily above and beyond those required to keep within the law for business activities, and, moreover, the activities should be visible, and communicated to both internal and external stakeholders (Arvidsson, 2010).

Xu (2016) also recognises that a tourism organisation’s CSR can impact on customers’ perceived image of the company and also its impact on their brand loyalty. Zanfardini, Simó and Alcañiz’s (2013) research proposed that such loyalty could also be extended to the destination, with tourists who perceive high or low levels of CSR associations extrapolating high or low levels of attitudinal loyalty accordingly to a tourism destination. These authors also found that tourists who perceive high levels of social responsibility in a tourism place tend to associate that with higher perceptions of quality. Thus, to at least some extent, CSR efforts can also be seen to indirectly affect tourists’ satisfaction. However, Xu’s (2016) exploratory research into Chinese domestic tourists’ attitudes towards hotel policies and CSR found that not only did over 30 per cent of respondents not care whether or not the hotel undertook any CSR activities, but also that only 12 per cent believed that such activities were motivated towards the betterment of society, whereas 35 per cent of respondents believed motives were solely self-serving, to provide advertising and image-building opportunities for the very fact that CSR was being undertaken (the self-promoter’s paradox – see Ashforth and Gibbs, 1989). Arvidsson (2010) found that it remains vital to include CSR in corporate communications, but that the communication of an organisation’s CSR activities now seems to be more about being preventative in order to minimise value destruction than being about value creation. However, the question remains as to whether it is even possible to practice socially responsible business if a focus remains on profitability. Indeed, is CSR, as the argument is discussed in Farrington et al.’s (2017, p. 33) article “incompatible with the profit-maximising principles keeping businesses alive”?

**Responsible tourism and sustainability**

If ethics in the context of SMTEs are guided by individual entrepreneurs’ beliefs about what is right and what is wrong, and appropriate/inappropriate actions, social responsibility can, therefore, be seen to be concerned with the impact of these actions on society and the environment. Marketing’s responsibility for both the positive and negative impacts of tourism in a destination, the impact of ethical business practices on service quality, and tourists’ attendant perceptions and practices were raised in a number of sessions at the 3rd International Congress on Ethics and Tourism (Apollo, 2017). Indeed, in many discussions on Responsible Tourism found in the extant literature, the onus of responsibility is placed more on the tourist consumer than the tourism business supplier. Sin (2016), for example, considers ethics and responsibility from the perspective of the tourist. Kim et al. (2017, p. 5) link the responsibility of the tourist to the ethical issues underpinning responsible tourism which then creates better tourism destinations by “protecting the environment, respecting local cultures, benefiting local communities, reducing pollution, and enhancing experiences”. Mihalic (2016) believes that a focus on awareness, followed by the creation of an agenda as a blueprint for action, in economic, environmental and socio-cultural areas linked to sustainability understanding, can translate into more responsible tourism practices. Thus, although coining the rather clumsy term “responsustable tourism”, Mihalic (2016, p. 469) proposes that “merging the words responsible (behaviour-based) and sustainable (concept and values-based) [...] fully reflects the academic and practical debate and action that is increasingly labelled ‘responsible’ tourism, yet de facto based on sustainability”. There remain barriers to implementing tourism in a responsible and sustainable way. Yüksel et al. (2015, p. 119) summarised five themes when referring to Graci’s (2008) study into such barriers in Indonesia that also appear pertinent to this research, namely:

- Inadequate resources, particularly funds and information; lack of momentum from business owners; island culture and the isolation of sustainability issues from all other business aspects of the destination/organization; government bureaucracy and corruption; and physical attributes such as infrastructure impediments.
Social, economic and cultural conditions vary across different countries. While on the one hand, ethical principles can be seen to transcend such issues (Hosmer, 1994), on the other hand, it is these varied social economic and cultural conditions that make the pursuit of normative ethics difficult to achieve, especially in tourism settings where host and guest cultures may vary dramatically on many levels. Moreover, while the tourism markets for Corfu are highly culturally heterogeneous during the tourism season, so are the people working in tourism businesses, and even out of season the expatriate community in Corfu accounts for 10 per cent of the island’s full-time resident population. Yet even with the dominance of SMTEs in the industry, there remains limited knowledge about the ethical practices of such businesses. It is known that small business owners’ ethical practices are driven by their individual values and beliefs (Power et al., 2017), yet Buckley (2012) found that it is such individual responses to issues surrounding responsibility that remain under-researched but of high practitioner and academic interest. It is also known that such responses, translated into business practices, impact on tourist perceptions not only of individual businesses, but can also impact on tourist perceptions of an entire destination. However, operating a wholly ethical and responsible business, whose actions go above and beyond what is required by law, can be costly and, therefore, difficult if not impossible to achieve for SMTEs (Farrington et al., 2017), especially those operating in countries such as Greece that have been heavily affected by the economic crisis and increasing austerity measures including increased taxation and strict capital controls (Visvizi, 2016). Furthermore, issues of responsibility can also be seen to rest with tourists themselves. The literature, therefore, also considers these issues from two dimensions, with Mihaic (2016) identifying these as being about sustainability, which is based on concepts and values, and responsibility, which is based more on actual behaviours. This research aims to consider both dimensions of concepts and behaviours to help further knowledge into both cultural values and economic constraints on SMTEs business practices.

Methodology

The majority of empirical papers considering business ethics in a hospitality and tourism context between 1995 and 2014 have been quantitative studies focusing on these issues in the hotel and general hospitality industry in developed countries (Köseoğlu et al., 2016). It is, therefore, acknowledged that research based on a wider consideration of businesses within the industry, and also conducted from a mixed methods approach, could offer additional insights that could further knowledge of business ethics specifically in a tourism and hospitality context (Köseoğlu et al., 2016). It is also proposed that the value of CSR research increases when it is contextualised within a specific industry (Farrington et al., 2017). Therefore, this research focuses not only on SMTEs, but on those located within a specific country, as this is likely to draw out issues raised regarding the culture within which ethical decisions are taken, while also considering the effects of ethical and illegal practices in that country. Based on similar reasons to Garay et al.’s (2017) research, this study also focuses on SMTEs, not only because of their sheer numbers in the tourism industry, but also because they tend to be able to draw less than larger businesses on resources and information regarding sustainability issues. This research is approached as an exploratory case study contextualised on the island of Corfu. The exploratory case study method is deemed appropriate when dealing with complex and contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts, especially where the complexity is attributable to the lack of clearly defined boundaries between a phenomenon and its context. In this respect, context becomes crucial to understanding the phenomenon. Such a method is also suitable to be used when events are unable to be manipulated. Multiple sources of both field and documentary evidence should be used. The exploratory case may often result in thick description, although such a method is not limited to, or characterised by, the use of qualitative data (Yin, 1989, 1994, 2009). Although undertaken from a mixed methods approach, this case does have a qualitative focus. The rationale for this is based on similar reasons to Power et al. (2017) who also explored ethics in SMTEs through gathering rich qualitative data.

Case study: country context

Buhalis (2001, p. 441) stresses that “Greece is one of the most remote, peripheral, insular and poor economic regions of the EU”. Greece continues to rely upon tourism as a major contributor to its GDP, while still requiring improvements in the ways it manages and deals with tourism in
both its public and private sectors, and the country’s economy remains troubled. Greece has been in significant recession since the start of the economic crisis in 2008, with GDP dropping by over 27 per cent, rising unemployment, lowered levels of consumer spending and discretionary income, rising levels of poverty and homelessness, decreased investments and a shrinking private sector economy, where the majority of businesses are micro-businesses operating in the service sector, yet these businesses are “swamped by excessive taxation”. The country is now seeing attendant effects of all these various social and economic crises upon both business ethics and culture (Visvizi, 2016). This is also seen in the decline in tourism which has had “dramatic implications to local economies” (Knowles and Curtis, 1999, p. 87) in countries such as Greece. Corruption is endemic across the business environment in Greece, and the Greek population tend to perceive government and public services as corrupt, untrustworthy, lacking in integrity and unethical (GAN Integrity, 2015). Indeed the country is ranked by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as the 4th most corrupt developed nation (Chrysopoulos, 2016), although in a global context Greece is ranked in the top third (59th out of 180) nations overall in terms of transparency (Transparency International, 2017). Transparency International’s indexing system of countries and territories that are perceived as very clean (scoring 100) compared to being perceived as highly corrupt (scoring 0), scores Greece 48 against a global average score of 43, and a European average score of 34. While there remain perceptions of corruption in Greece, according to global data (rather than data focused only on developed nations) the country is performing better than many of its European counterparts and has improved its public perception each year since 2012 when its score was only 36.

According to the most recent census data, the island of Corfu has a permanent resident population of just over 100,000. Roughly one third of the island’s residents live in its only city which is also named Corfu (Κέρκυρα in Greek). This sickle-shaped island is only around 32 km (20 miles) wide at its widest point along its Northern coast and is only around 64 km (40 miles) in length. Many of Corfu’s residents travel regularly into the city from its wider whole-island region to go about various aspects of their daily lives, and during the summer tourist season many of the city’s residents travel out into the island’s tourism destinations to work, and some also to take up their summer work-related residence in these destinations.

The Geolab Institute of the Ionian University in Corfu held a conference in 2016 with an aim to place crime, particularly economic criminality, and corruption in the tourism-research agenda’ recognising that to date these issues “have received relatively little attention in tourism scholarship” (Geolab Institute, 2016).

While the Prefecture of Corfu in recent times had been previously divided into 15 administrative municipalities, since 2011 it has reverted to one single administrative municipality within the Prefecture of the Region of the (seven) Ionian Islands. Thus, in terms of both government and governance, and in terms of both policy and practice, across the island as a whole there is a blurring of the boundaries of what is considered of relevance to only its main city and what to the island as a whole sub-region.

There are around 16,000 registered business in Corfu, of varying sizes, and ranging across four main sectors, which as defined by the Corfu Chamber of Commerce are: commerce, manufacturing, tourism and services (Figure 1).

Sampling approach

Statistics are not available on how many of Corfu’s registered businesses are SMEs. Therefore, a non-probability snowball sampling approach was taken to gathering both qualitative and quantitative data through the use of questionnaires. The researcher lives on the island and is well-connected with the Corfu Chamber of Commerce and the local business community. Respondents were initially purposively selected based on the qualification that they must own, manage or work for, a tourism enterprise that currently operates on Corfu.

Survey instrument

The questionnaire was structured in three sections. Section 1 was headed “about you and your business”. This section asked mainly closed questions concerning the respondent and their
tourism business, i.e. what type of tourism business is the respondent involved with, their role (owner, manager, employee), how many people are employed by the business, the respondent’s gender and age. An open question allowed respondents to state their nationality.

Section 2, headed “about illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices” was designed to gather quantitative data from a closed question listing 19 illegal and unethical business practices, and asking respondents to indicate which of these they had witnessed at first hand in the previous ten years. The options given to respondents in this question were derived mainly from publications outlining some of the unethical (i.e. immoral, illegal or harmful practices, Polyxeni and Katsoula, 2008) already recognised as happening in some tourism businesses in Greece in general or Corfu in particular. As derived from the literature, these included: tourists being overcharged for goods or services, differential pricing for tourists and “locals” and taxis not using the metre (Giannarou, 2017), tax fraud, bribery and a weak legal system (GAN Integrity, 2015), domestic animals being abandoned and/or mistreated (Moorhouse et al., 2016; Popescu et al., 2017), fly-tipping and rubbish being dumped into the sea (Skinner, 2016), goods or services being sold to young tourists under the legal age to purchase them, being sold illegal alcohol (“Bomba”) or illegal substances (including laughing gas), and being sold goods or services while intoxicated (Williams-Burnett et al., 2016). However, other illegal and unethical practices were also listed in this question that had not been found within the literature, but which had arisen from various personal discussions the author has had with tourism businesses and tourists on the island, and found in discussions in online forums suggesting that other unethical practices on the island include bad customer service, business owners/employees talking negatively about customers behind their backs, smoking permitted inside public spaces, unlicensed and uninsured sellers/practitioners (e.g. beach/street sellers, massage on the beach), and business employees not being paid legally, paid late or their IKA (National Insurance) contributions not being paid. Although not arising from the literature but from more anecdotal sources, these
matters were included in the survey in order to explore the issues empirically. An “other” option was also included for respondents to provide additional answers.

Section 3, headed “about your views of tourism ethics and social responsibility” was designed to gather qualitative data through three questions. The first question in this section asked “What does it mean to you for a tourism enterprise to be socially responsible and ethical?”. The second questions asked “To what extent are tourism businesses’ ethical and socially responsible practices on Corfu affected by cultural values and/or by economic constraints?”. The final question in this section, which was therefore the final question in the data collection instrument, asked respondents “How does your tourism businesses try to ensure its actions are socially responsible and ethical and take into account the impact of its actions on all of its stakeholders?”

**Data collection and analysis**

Questionnaires were distributed in person and online initially purposively via the researcher’s local contacts amongst SMTEs in Corfu. The snowball approach was then employed for further distribution of the online versions of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was available in both English and in Greek. All Greek responses were translated back into English for reporting in this paper, and the translation checked by a native Greek speaker.

Simple frequency descriptive statistics were analysed from the quantitative data that had been collected in order to identify the characteristics of the respondents and their involvement in various types of tourism enterprises, and the extent of the existence of illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices the respondents had witnessed at first hand over the past ten years. Rich thick description has been presented through an analysis of the qualitative responses gathered on respondents’ perceptions of the impact of cultural values and economic constraints on tourism businesses’ ethical practices.

**Analysis and discussion of findings**

Although only 60 questionnaires were returned, responses in this research were gathered from a much wider range of SMTEs than in previous studies that Köseoğlu et al. (2016) identified had focused mainly on business ethics only in the hotel and hospitality industry (Figure 2).

All were small businesses (under 250 employees) the majority (90 per cent, n = 54) were micro-businesses with between 1–9 staff, 4 had between 10 and 49 staff, while only 2 employed between 50 and 249 people. Responses were gathered from 39 males, and 21 females. Of these, 38 were business owners, 9 business managers and 13 employees. The majority (n = 52) were aged between 35 and 64, 7 were aged between 18 and 34, 1 was aged between 65 and 74. Questionnaires were returned from Greek respondents (n = 17), respondents with dual nationality (Greek/British n = 2, Greek/Dutch, n = 2, Greek/French n = 1, and Greek/American n = 1) and ex-patriates (British n = 19, Dutch n = 6, Australian n = 2, German n = 2, Spanish n = 2, American n = 1, Canadian n = 1, French n = 1, Hungarian n = 1, Irish n = 1, and South African n = 1).

There were no discernible differences in answers to either the closed or open questions according to gender, age or nationality of the respondents, by ownership, or by type or size of business. Where specific characteristics did seem pertinent (e.g. one response from a micro business stating that because of its size the issue of costs of implementing CSR were not as onerous as for larger businesses, or where a response from a Greek business owner related to insider insights about the country’s culture) these have been indicated in the analysis where appropriate.

**Evidence of illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices**

Illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices were identified in both qualitative and quantitative responses. One employee mentioned “so many things that are not being done in most of the companies I have worked for […] workers, clients and environmental issues that are not respected and, at least by law, should be”. Another business owner believed that “some businesses take advantage of tourists”. A business employee informed the study that “when I worked with a large Tour Operator they claimed to be into responsible tourism and customers
had a small amount added to cost of holiday for that. However they did not practice their policy. A manager had received “no pay increase in 5 years”, one employee had witnessed at first-hand “business owners lying to employees about their contract, IKA and other working conditions, not allowing them to take legal days off and changing their working shift in order to pay them less”. Analysis of the quantitative data identified the illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices most frequently witnessed at first hand by business owners, managers, and employees over the last ten years (Figure 3).

Figure 2  Tourism enterprises

- Travel agent/excursions/transport/tourist information n=16
- Accommodation n=15
- Bar/Taverna n=9
- Local food/drink/craft products n=5
- Yacht charter n=5
- Sport/Culture/experience holiday services n=5
- Tourist shop n=3
- Tourist attraction n=2

Figure 3  Illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices

- Young tourists provided with illegal substances (e.g. laughing gas)
- Goods/services being sold to young tourists under the legal age
- Tourists provided with goods/services while intoxicated
- Young tourists provided with illegal alcohol (“Bomba”)
- Rubbish being dumped into the sea
- Animals being mistreated
- Tourism businesses not declaring all their taxable income
- Business owners/employees talking about customers
- Fly-tipping (illegally dumping rubbish or waste products)
- Taxis not using the meter
- Overcharging for goods/services
- Tourists not being provided with a receipt for goods/services
- Bad customer service
- Business employees not being paid IKA (Greek national insurance)
- Smoking permitted inside public spaces
- Unlicensed and uninsured sellers/practitioners
- Tourism businesses not declaring all their taxable income
How do SMTEs perceive and enact social responsibility and ethical business behaviour?

One Greek business owner noted that “This is difficult to answer, because business owners here are not educated in this”. This bears out Garay et al.’s (2017) findings that SMTEs seem to have less access to and information about issues of responsibility and sustainability.

Specifically with regard to the treatment of employees, respondents perceived that a socially responsible and ethical tourism business would have “good work practices”, “employees are paid in time, enough and treated well”, “working reasonable hours and having their time off, also in the season”, staff would be treated “with dignity and respect”, there would be “basic Health & Safety in place”, a business should “take care of the workers, make sure everything and everyone is/feels safe and secure, get paid, has health insurance, taxes are paid”, the employees of the enterprise “should work according to the laws and be paid accordingly”, “when you treat them well and support them you get it back from them”:

In terms of social responsibility, responsibility towards employees must be a priority, as must honest and civil customer service. In terms of the wider community, businesses should try to work together for the good of the whole, rather than backstabbing or being indifferent towards the general situation. Corfu is in trouble - solidarity may be our only way out – and that can only happen when locals work together to keep good standards and mutual support systems.

And as one respondent noted, it can be enacted in practice:

I work for a company that pays well, better than most, and on time, while also paying its taxes and all legal obligations too. It can be done! We also try to be as eco-friendly as possible although we don’t have much help from the system (lack of recycling).

When addressing environmental matters, it was perceived that socially responsible and ethical businesses should recycle and should “work more environmentally friendly […] with respect for the natural beauty that is around them. Preserving and conserving what they have, which is their only true capital”:

In terms of the environment, it is common knowledge that Corfu has a lot of problems where waste disposal is concerned. However, businesses that do produce waste (mine does not), should try to minimise where possible and be part of the solution.

I would expect to be aware of the social/environmental policies and practices in the everyday practices and attitudes. I would want to know there were environmental practices such as recycling and use of solar and wind energies where possible.

While issues of “sustainability” were not mentioned explicitly by respondents, the concept of sustainability in terms of societal and environmental impacts of SMTE business practices did arise. This may indeed be a reflection of the notion raised by Mihalic (2016) that what is often labelled as sustainable in a tourism context equates to responsibility, although sustainability tends to relate more to conceptual values-based ideals, with responsibility relating much more to actual behaviours.

Responses also linked the notion of ethics and social responsibility to customer perceptions about the business (Xu, 2016; Zanfardini, Simó, and Alcañiz, 2013). It was perceived that socially responsible and ethical businesses should “always treat tourists in the same way we would like to be treated. Always try to improve”, “provide services that comply to a quality/price relation, while not deteriorating the local environment but underlying and bringing out the local character”, “treat their customers correctly and politely in a friendly manner always. The customer is the person coming in to spend his money and should be treated with respect”, “More tourists are going to come if they have a good service”, “That’s the way to keep your clients happy and satisfied. So you have repeaters and word of mouth advertisement”, “I have been a business owner for 15 years here and have always had happy guests because I describe accurately, give excellent support and feedback and receive in return 5 star reviews”.

One Greek business owner found that the best way to manage meaningful stakeholder relationships was to consider the consequences of all their business actions and obligations “towards the State, society and workers”, to evidence “respect for our customers”, to ensure employees are offered a “safe and non-discriminatory working environment” and to consider the way the business operates in terms of “care for society and the protection of the environment”.
Other responses suggested that this can be managed “by being closely networked with local stakeholders such as small businesses and local communities so as to understand what impact our business can have in a positive sense and where possible avoid negative impacts”, and “by constantly looking for the best solution to the given challenge, taking into account the staff, the guests, the local stakeholders in the village, the laws and culture of the country”:

My business ensures that suppliers and employees are paid up-front. All deals are made by mutual agreement, and we forge trust-based relationships with all our associates with a view to long-term collaboration. We go beyond the call of duty where customer service is concerned […] We emphasise the collective good, function as a collective, and support all our associates in their endeavours, whether or not this is reciprocated (e.g. mutual advertising, word of mouth promotion, good communication, timely payment […]). And we have minimal environmental impact. The nature of our business is such that we are able to do this - but we do know that not everyone can, and we are tolerant towards those who cannot - as long as individuals (esp. employees) are not harmed.

Respondents also recognised that ethical and socially responsible business practices can come at a cost, for example, seeking to use “ethically sourced materials and using local suppliers despite the higher cost”, or recognising that compliance with the law and taxation requirements may affect profitability:

I stay within the law and declare and pay my tax and other charges lawfully even if it means less profit.

However, on the other hand, this may not be perceived as much of an issue for a micro-business than for larger tourism enterprises:

We are a very tiny business with no employees which is how we are able to be profitable. We take good care of our guests and intentionally charge below market rate so its affordable for guests to eat at restaurants and shop.

Bearing out Power et al.’s (2017, p. 37) findings concerning the way an entrepreneur’s own ethics drives their business practices, some business owners identified their own personal values with the way they practice business:

We are good people and try to manifest this in all our actions, not always successfully, but we are trying.

Honesty, faithfulness, being genuine, being socially aware, being myself.

I don’t cheat, lie, or steal from my clients.

We recycle plastic bottle tops and encourage guests to do so.

Yet generally there was little mentioned concerning the onus on the tourist to act responsibly. Where this issue was raised, it generally concerned tourists seeking low cost rather than high quality, complaining if beer prices were raised by a few cents, or not seeking to engage with local culture (Kim et al., 2017), asking for “chips with everything” rather than consuming authentic local food:

Everybody wants chips, some people don’t want to try the tzatziki.

If you pay everything you’re supposed to pay you’ll never make any money, that’s the problem, ask everybody, you have to pay out and then people come in and complain you’ve raised the price of beer by 20 cents.

As well as what a business should do to be ethical and socially responsible, responses also identified what businesses should not do:

Not to exploit anyone be they employee, customer, local, or another business in particular local small businesses; not going into direct competition with someone who relies on the income from that business to live.

To what extent are SMTEs’ ethical practices affected by cultural values?

Responses to this issue were mixed. Some respondents stressed that cultural values across Corfu were not always perceived as contributing positively toward ethical practices. These included the way businesses react negatively to competition from other SMTEs, not always paying attention to laws, especially if that means tourist would not otherwise get the
holiday they want or expect (e.g. bars opening and not observing “quiet time” during the daytime siesta period, allowing smoking indoors, or staying open and playing music later than is allowed), and also tax avoidance and evasion, not only because of the current economic crisis, but historically, embedded in the local culture:

I think for many years businesses made easy money in tourism and now that the standard has gone up people expect more, there is with many an unwillingness to change […] Luckily this is not everywhere. Of course economics play a part in these practices - there is very little incentive for people to be, for example, honest about their tax returns.

Local cultural values sadly include strong negative competition, and there is little collective solidarity or understanding that bad publicity harms everyone.

Some businesses identified a temporal aspect to the issues:

Since the early 90s I have never seen any evidence of business owners/managers of businesses being proactive in terms of ethics and social practices. Greek people seem to be steeped in tradition and definitely constrained by the current climate.

Other responses noted that practices are improving over time, and things are not as bad nowadays as they may have been previously:

Of course all are in the business to make a fast buck when they can and cheating on prices […] is I believe still a common practice as is the lack sometimes but not so much as 10 years before.

Some responses perceived that the culture of the place was a positive element, although these also recognised that the enduring economic crisis may be having an additional effect on business practices:

Generally I feel the cultural values are a positive influence but increasingly the economic constraints appear to be placing the continuation of those cultural values under threat […] the cultural values of the people of Corfu that make it the place it is.

One Greek business owner stated that while both cultural and economic factors do indeed affect business practices “they are but they shouldn’t. A new ethos is emerging in which ethical and socially responsible practices are self-evident”.

**To what extent are tourism business ethical practices affected by economic constraints?**

Economic constraints are seen to have a huge impact on ethical practices. Increased austerity measures implemented across Greece are increasing the number of taxes and raising the level of taxation a business must pay, while adding in new legal requirements with which businesses must comply, often as a way of enforcing the new taxes. Thus one business owner identified that “it is hard with the current rules and regulations to operate in a fully legalized and ethical way without paying way too much money”. Another Greek business owner stated that “the economic constraints during the ‘crisis years’ have been almost unbearable for people who try to hold an ethical and socially responsible business”. This bears out Farrington et al.’s (2017) concern that given the costs associated with implementing CSR, it may be impossible for businesses to practice social responsibility and remain profitable.

Moreover, businesses recognise that economic constraints can not only affect service quality but will also have an effect on employee pay:

A lot of businesses have to pay so many taxes that they are pushed to crop the quality of their work. The wages are so low that people don’t work with pleasure. Businesses in Greece never get support from the state so the money they pay for their taxes gets lost.

That businesses do not perceive they get anything back from the state from the amount of taxes they pay, and with a shortening season, decreased tourism numbers and decreased tourism spend as seen in other similar Mediterranean destinations, coupled with a rather lax historic attitude toward compliance with tax regulations, led one Greek business owner to explain:

Since 2010 we have to do this to survive - we are overtaxed now, with all the different taxes it can go up to 86%. All-inclusives have squeezed our incomes down. And, when the season is so short, with all the taxes now, we really only get income from 40 days work a year - we need ‘black money’ to keep going.
An alternative would be for the State to make taxation levels more reasonable:

If they could make tax more reasonable they’d find people would be happier to pay it, but in Greece people have been avoiding paying tax for years.

The effects of what are perceived as being overly onerous legislative requirements and overly heavy taxation were also identified as having a particular detrimental effect on SMTEs:

People are often working far beyond their comfort level not having a day off for many months which is exhausting but necessary to survive. This would not be the case if the taxes were more in line with what is logical and affordable for the businesses.

There are those who want to follow both legal and ethical considerations, but simply cannot survive if they do so. The current taxation laws are crippling small businesses and need urgent reform if they are to survive.

This is mainly influenced by the economic crisis and the suffocating limits imposed on small/medium-sized businesses. For example, many small businesses who want to insure their employees cannot, because the insurance premiums are disproportionately high in relation to their profits.

Corfu’s SMTEs do seem to recognise that socially responsible organisations display an understanding of the common norms and shared values of all of their stakeholders (Maignan and McAlister, 2003; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). While the quantitative findings suggested that many illegal, unethical and socially irresponsible practices continue to be witnessed at first-hand across the island, the qualitative findings suggested that there are common areas of shared understanding concerning what should constitute normative ethical practices, and this focused overwhelmingly on the concept of “respect”. To be socially responsible and ethical, businesses should have respect for the social and cultural environment within which they operate, respect for the economic environment within which other SMTEs operate, to respect the laws, including paying relevant taxes, to respect suppliers, employees and to respect tourism customers, and to respect the natural environment. Moreover, in agreement with Farrington et al. (2017) that social responsibility should encompass the economic, legal and ethical expectations of society, and as outlined by Arvidsson (2010), responses also identified that to be socially responsible and ethical meant a business should go over and above what is required by law. Answers to open questions generated responses that businesses should also show respect for society through engaging in voluntary and charitable efforts outside of their main business focus – to give something back to society and those whom the government is not helping, and to give a proportion of profits, produce and services to those in need, and to participate proactively in initiatives that could have a positive effect on both environmental and social issues. It was, therefore, also deemed to be important for SMTEs to seek to use “local products at all times”.

Answers to open questions all stated that to be a socially responsible tourism business the enterprise should consider the natural, social, cultural and economic environment within which it operates, and work according to set of values that respect all of these elements. However, when it comes to behaviours, it was important to identify the ways in which tourism businesses act and take into account the impact of their actions on stakeholders.

In summary therefore, and as displayed in the original conceptualisation of these issues below (Figure 4) the individual ethics of SMTEs and tourism entrepreneurs guide their actions which are affected by the natural, social, cultural and economic environments within which their businesses operate. These actions, translated into CSR activities in particular or social responsibility in general, in turn have an effect on these environments. Similarly, the individual ethics of tourists are not only affected by the environments from which and to which they travel, but are also affected by the social responsibility of the tourism businesses within these destinations. Efforts towards sustainable tourism can then be seen to be affected by the values of both tourists and tourism suppliers, while their behaviours can be seen to fall within the realm of responsible tourism.

**Conclusion**

Anecdotal evidence had suggested that in times of economic constraints particularly in countries such as Greece that have long been stereotyped as corrupt, business practices may become less than ethical or legal. Moreover, that this may be more prevalent amongst SMTEs
Power et al., 2017) that make up the majority of these nations’ tourism operators. This research has, therefore, explored these issues empirically in order to understand the impact of both cultural values and economic constraints on tourism businesses’ practices, thus contributing to gaps in the literature that concern the ethical stance and practices of tourism entrepreneurs in a cultural context (Buckley, 2012; Zanfardini, Simó and Alcañiz, 2013).

Although based on only a relatively small sample, this research has informed the debate on tourism ethics through gathering responses from a much broader range of SMTEs than has been found in previous studies that have tended to focus on businesses operating in the hotel and hospitality industry (Köseoglu et al., 2016).

Contextualising the research in a specific country has also allowed this study to better inform issues relating to the cultural environment within which socially responsible and ethical business is both perceived and enacted. In conclusion, this paper addressed three specific research questions, and has found the following:

RQ1. How do tourism enterprises perceive and enact social responsibility and ethical business behaviour?

In the context of Corfu, this study found that for a tourism enterprise to be socially responsible and ethical means to base its actions on respect – for employees, tourists, other businesses, society as a whole and the natural environment, and doing so in a way that goes over and above legal requirements, taking consideration of the effect of its business practices on all stakeholders, not just being proactive in ensuring its actions may impact positively but also ensuring its actions do not societal or environmental harm:

RQ2. To what extent are tourism business ethical practices affected by cultural values?

Those SMTEs that participated in this research identified the cultural factors in general across Greece, notably as implied by Polyxeni and Katsoula (2008) and Visvizi (2016) of an historic reticence to pay tax, and also a lack of understanding concerning the impact of business practices on the natural and social environments within which these businesses operate.

Responses also identified some of the difficulties of acting in a socially responsible way given the increased regulation and taxation leveled against them due to increased austerity measures (Visvizi, 2016), thus implying that economic constraints are impacting on business practices across Greece for this reason.

Although it is recognised that in some cultural contexts, such as on the Greek island of Corfu, culture does impact on business practices, specifically in this instance a cultural history of tax avoidance and evasion since the heydays of the tourism boom, and a competitive rather than
cooperative business culture between SMTEs that may have been exacerbated by the island’s declining tourism numbers, revenues and season length:

RQ3. To what extent are tourism business ethical practices affected by economic constraints? Moreover, the Greek island of Corfu has suffered an economic crisis since 2010 that has seen increased austerity measures imposing additional laws and taxes on small businesses that are not always in a position to meet these requirements and stay profitable. Thus, while many businesses want to act in a socially responsible and ethical manner, to do so could lead to the end of a business completely if this means losing profitability. However, not doing so can impact negatively on tourists’ perceptions of the business which in turn could lead to a lack of sustainability of the business anyway.

This research has also, therefore, made a contribution to filling previously identified gaps in knowledge concerning tourism, CSR, responsibility, sustainability and ethics (Zanfardini, Aguirre and Tamagni, 2013). However, it must be recognised that this research contributes additional insights into these issues (Zanfardini, Simó and Alcañiz, 2013) in a Greek cultural context. Further research might explore these matters in a wider range of countries, with a larger sample size, and with a focus from a tourist perspective.

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Further reading


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An ethical conundrum: the estimation of event attendance

Vern Biaett

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine issues of ethical corporate social responsibility related to the estimation of event attendance, scrutinize the philosophy of situational ethics as justification for reporting inflated figures and present a potential solution to the dilemma.

Design/methodology/approach – A conceptual approach is applied. First, the importance of attendance as a primary evaluation variable for economic, social and environmental impact studies, as well as for event stakeholder return on investment in general, is clarified. A brief review follows on the subject of event attendance estimation as reported in both popular and academic literature, before moving into a content analysis of this literature to investigate if there are existing concerns of ethical corporate social responsibility.

Findings – Attendance at events as reported by popular media remains controversial. Methods for arriving at accurate figures have been investigated and reported upon in academic literature, but there remains no consensus on how to best estimate event crowd size. Inflated attendance numbers reported are too often justified by situational ethics, a non-logical philosophy that has been previously debunked. A content analysis of popular media and academic literature revealed a lack of concern for ethical corporate social responsibility when it comes to the accurate estimation of event attendance.

Practical implications – The failure to accept ethical corporate social responsibility when estimating attendance harms event stakeholders and leads to misleading and unreliable impact data.

Originality/value – This subject has not been previously addressed and is important to advancing the professionalism of event management.

Keywords Corporate social responsibility, Ethics, Event attendance, Situational ethics

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

A popular New York tourist website (www.nyctourist.com/macys_map.htm) reported the 2015 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade attracted 3.5m on-street spectators, making this iconic parade one of the largest worldwide celebrations. The website includes a map indicating the parade began at 77th Street and Central Park West, headed in a southerly zigzagging route, and finished at 34th Street and 7th Avenue, a distance of approximately 2.6 miles or 14,000 feet.

Mathematically, for this parade route to have accommodated 3.5m people, each spectator would have had to stand in a 2 square foot space (1 foot by 2 feet) and they would have had to be 125 people deep on both sides of the entire parade. This was not physically possible. News photos taken during the parade indicate a crowd with an average depth of only 10–12 people, equating to attendance closer to 150,000 people. That is an extremely significant difference and only the tip of the iceberg of the ethical conundrum of corporate social responsibility that exists when it comes to estimating and reporting attendance at festivals and events. The Chinese New Year’s parade held annually in Vancouver, Canada has reported a crowd of 100,000 along a 1.3 kilometer route (www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/chinese-new-year-parade-attended-by-thousands-despite-rain-1.3448306) as has the Warrens Cranberry Festival in a rural Wisconsin village of 400 people with extremely limited road access and parking (www.cranfest.com/fest-facts). Officials reported the attendance for the Kansas City Royals World Series parade in 2015 as 800,000 (Grathoff, 2016) in a metropolitan area of only 2m people.
Around the globe faux attendance figures have regularly been reported, including 6m admirers to see the Pope along a 6 mile motorcade in Manila (www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-30869019), 86,000 attendees per day at the Rock al Parque music festival in Bogotá, Columbia which has a venue capacity of 20,000 (www.wikifestivals.com/wiki/rock-al-parque), and 60,000 party goers reported by police at the Beach Hop in Whangamata, New Zealand, a small rural town with a population of only 3,000 (www.police.govt.nz/news/release/22723). Inaccurate attendance accounts are reported worldwide as those who produce and report on festivals and events tend to make post event guestimates and fail to apply pre-planned methods to accurately arrive at reliable and reasonable estimates (Bliaett and Hultsman, 2015).

Situational ethics

Sundry festival and event producers assert inaccurate attendance is of little importance or matter and that no real harm is done by inflated figures. This type of rational can best be described as situational ethics (Fletcher, 1967), a naturalistic philosophic theory that proposed issues of right and wrong depend upon the present situation, not prescriptive rules, and that means justify the ends without the application of rules. The greatest limitation of situational ethics is that it provides false justification based on predicted or expected consequences which are highly dependent on subjective opinions of current and future actions. For event managers these thoughts are often translated into the attitude that since no method has been agreed upon, that few conduct scientific evaluation and that many others also embellish, then one only punishes themselves if they do not likewise follow suit.

Unfortunately this opinion is not corporately socially responsible and does not agree with the formal meaning of ethics, defined as standards of right and wrong that influence moral conduct, duty and judgment. Ethics demand non-contradictory, consistent moral actions, values and standards. The term situational ethics is best explained as unprofessional viewpoints or irresponsible personal philosophies that allow rules to be made based on precarious circumstances. Situational ethics were originally defined as reflective morality (Dewey and Tufts, 1908) and were dismissed as over sensitivity to circumstances, context and cultural tradition, as well as non-logical. Reflective morality excluded universal human truths, lacked an ethical framework, was difficult to implement and led to inconsistent results. Shortly after the concept of reflective morality had been reintroduced under a new title of situational ethics (Fletcher, 1967) it was widely attacked and again rejected as a theory of no ethics at all (Callahan, 2000). Although the concept of situational ethics is inadvertently employed by festival and event managers, discussion of it, or even the discussion of ethics as a philosophical construct pertaining to the estimation of attendance at events at all, has failed to appear in the academic literature. Researchers are customarily associated with processes of ethical review, and even though ethical requirements in the social sciences can be challenging to navigate, until guidelines and protocols are established, the consistent accurate estimation of attendance at events will remain unprincipled. While providing suggestions on ways to avoid ethical quandaries, Smith (2003, p. 50) stated the best defense against ethical conflict was to be aware of foreseeable conflict and recognize that when an ethical pitfall occurred, it was because one has “unwittingly slid too far down a slippery slope – a result of ignorance about their ethical obligations.” Ethical obligations, as opposed to situational ethical compulsions, include the belief that one must practice with expertise while gathering evidence with accurate assessment. “So central is consistency to ethics that some moralists have held that it is the whole of ethics” (Blair, 2009).

Instead of situational ethics, those who estimate attendance, and use these figures as variables to determine various impacts, would be better served to employ modern business ethics. It is with these that one is most interested in outcome-based impacts and the long-term maximization of results for all stakeholders. Business ethics are built on the foundation of legal ramifications, public relation impacts, financial implications and risk management. These ethics can be traced to the Philosopher Immanuel Kant who insisted on duty-based principles of moral behavior. Two primary concerns of business ethics are honesty and integrity. Corporate social responsibility, as part of business ethics, is a commitment to reporting truthful impacts and accurate attendance counts are a key variable when determining these impacts.
The present estimation of attendance at festivals and events is inconsistent and employing situational ethics to provide justification is immoral. Today the reporting of festival and event attendance is engulfed in a conundrum. To begin solving this problem it is time to embrace the very cut and dry requirements of business ethics with its emphasis on truth and honesty, and to cast-off the gray areas of discredited situational ethics.

**Ethical quantifiers of evaluation**

The idea that overstated attendance at festivals and events is not problematic is a false assumption. These figures, used as key variables in marketing studies, operational logistics, experience design, sponsorship, and economic, social, and cultural impact assessment, are viewed as one of the most significant quantifiers of achievement and symbolic rhetoric. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Office for Statistics in their [Framework for Cultural Statistics Handbook No. 3 – Festival Statistics: Key Concepts and Current Practices](www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/fcs-handbook-3-festival-statistics.pdf) requires that assessment exercises specify what is measured with variables appropriately matched to indicators, with audience size included as the first variable. A crucial area of ethical concern for every event manager is their corporate social responsibility to positively contribute to, and impact, the community (Edginton *et al.*, 2008). Festivals and events that report inflated attendance statistics tend to attract greater attention from the media, creating a superficial perception of overall importance and community well-being. The tangible and intangible increases in social capital that result from community festivals (Accordia and Whitford, 2006; Blaett, 2013; Remington, 2003), the urban regeneration and revitalization powers accredited to events (Smith, 2012), the animation of cultural capital that awakens with celebration (Foley *et al.*, 2012) and the creditability of marketing for free-to-view sports events (Davies *et al.*, 2010) are all seriously misrepresented by inaccurate attendance numbers. Emergency personnel, waste management and other public services as well as public facilities are supplied by local government for the safety and support of festivals and events to enhance the quality of life in communities. Sometimes services are sponsored while other times they are paid for by the event, but regardless of who pays the bill, when provided services are excessive or unneeded due to inflated attendance, civic resources are misused and the community is harmed. Governmental public policy-making bodies as well as NGO community development groups that provide financial and other resources for festivals and events are misled to the true worth of their contributions when event managers fail in their corporate social responsibility to provide the proper attendance data required for planning, operational and evaluation purposes. Communities are harmed when attendance data are negligently falsified or misrepresented.

The estimation of crowd size at rallies, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins and other types of politically oriented events are rhetorically symbolic for both the organizer’s cause and those in opposition. For the past six decades political, civil right and war protest event crowd counts have been contrastingly contentious. The size of these crowds has been regarded as propaganda and described as a duel between competing pundits (Katz, 1991). In the current age of instant media and public opinion the reporting of attendance at major events is quintessential information that influences elected officials and citizens to re-think and reconsider their assumptions, conventions and beliefs. It is harmful to the will and betterment of the community, and to the democratic process when attendance figures are conveyed nonchalantly and carelessly or worse yet, purposefully inaccurate based on an agenda.

Equally important for event managers are ethical concerns surrounding their social corporate responsibility to operate with integrity and fairness toward all stakeholders (Edginton *et al.*, 2008). Festival and event sponsors are one of those notable stakeholders. Overlapping the commercialization of festivals and events, the most widely accepted sponsorship strategy has been developed and championed by IEG (www.sponsorship.com) based upon a leveraged fair and equitable exchange of event benefits for sponsor assets. With the present experience-driven economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) in full force, live events have been added to print, electronic and social media as the fourth arm of the modern marketing campaign. Physical, face to face, personal interaction with event attendees is a highly sought after sponsorship benefit. The value of impressions created by sponsor signs and banners, sampling booths, program ads, logos on
everything from trash boxes to t-shirts, inclusion in public address and stage announcements, and other on-site connections to festival and event attendees are all tangible benefits directly correlated to the number of people that contact these impressions (Jones, 2008). Likewise, intangible benefits of prestige, community partner goodwill and the activation of loyalty and brand awareness are benefits partially dependent on attendance. When sponsorship packages are formulated and sold based on a crowd size that was exaggerated or unsubstantiated the deal is unfair, fraudulent and harms the sponsor; it is unethical.

Similarly, it has long been acknowledged that festivals and events generate a direct economic impact as a by-product determined by means of non-resident spending brought into a community (Getz, 2007; Stefansdottir and Pradhan, 2014; Turco and Kelsey, 1992). The assessment of economic impact validates an event’s importance, imparts market profile, creates sense of place for a community, enriches citizen pride and provides critical data for local economic planning and political decisions. It frequently leads to the programming of similar events. The primary determinate for an economic impact assessment of festivals and events is attendance and if that variable is incorrect and inflated the study is compromised, implied return on investment is duplicitous, and again, as was the case with sponsorship, causes harm to multiple stakeholders.

Food and craft vendors are also festival and event stakeholders. The average food truck serves between 40 and 60 customers an hour and a large carnival type food trailer may do three to four times that volume. These vendors must have accurate attendance numbers to estimate food purchases and staffing. A comparable scenario exists for craft vendors. Vendors typically pay fees based on the number of potential customers and if an event incorrectly estimates attendance these stakeholders are impacted financially, misuse their time and miss out on other potential opportunities; they are treated unethically.

There are two fundamental explanations for the failure to accurately estimate festival and event attendance. The first is a lack of mathematic competency and technical knowledge of how to accomplish the task. People are innumerate with tendencies to personalize their experiences and have an inherent inability to comprehend large numbers (Paulos, 1988). The crowd at a large event does not stand still, it moves and it is fluid; people are not familiar with nor do they understand crowd dynamics or flow (Fruin, 1981; Still, 2015). The second explanation centers on the absence of social corporate responsibility. On one side of this issue are those who may be unmotivated to estimate correctly while the other side of the matter are those who exhibit purposeful unethical behavior. The report of attendance at festivals and events has rarely been completed by independent sources concerned with the ethical issue of accuracy, but rather those influenced by their personal agendas (Seife, 2010).

**Attendance estimation – popular media**

Festival and event producers have an ethical obligation to provide accurately estimated attendance and it is not without harm or long-term consequences to their communities and stakeholders if this corporate social responsibility is ignored or neglected. Controversies of attendance have been addressed in the popular media for many years. To provide an annotated glimpse of this controversy, a brief review of the Pasadena Tournament of Rose Parade, political events, and a sampling of other events follows, not intended to give a complete account of the situation, but rather to offer contextual appreciation on the historical polemic.

“Following the Second World War civilization placed a newfound emphasis on public relations, commercialism, and technology” (Biaett, 2015, p. 25) which lead to an increase in co-opting festivals and events to generate revenue and gain people’s attention. Coinciding with the advent of event sponsorship which materialized in the wake of the 1976 American Bicentennial and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, attendance issues began to arise in light of the popular allure and economic impact of festivals and events. It was at this time that attendance discrepancies began to enmesh the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade in California. Prior to this, the inaugural 1890 event was said to have attracted 2,000 people, the 1918 event 250,000 and by the early 1930s attendance was unquestioned at 1m (Clendenin, 2009). However, by the 1980s a highly suspect attendance of 1.5m was being disputed in the press and by other local parade and event producers. A Pasadena police officer at the Rose Bowl Parade in 1991, when asked how attendance was determined replied, “You go up in the air and you take a look down, and it’s like,
In the late 1960s, there were several student protests at the University of California Berkeley and Attendance estimation methods

There are things in the journalism business which we get so consistently wrong that one begins to wonder whether we labor under some error-doing curse. Consider the endlessly repeated problem of unreliable crowd counts. Political rallies, anti-war demonstrations, pro-war demonstrations, concerts, tractor pulls – at virtually any large gathering, one question which naturally occurs to a reporter is “I wonder how many people are here?” The question is logical. So, up to a point, is the reporter’s usual method of getting an answer, which is to find someone in authority and write down what he or she says, then put it in the paper, with proper attribution, of course. “Police said […] protest organizers said […] the fire department said […]” The problem, sadly, is that while the quotes may be accurate, what those people say on the subject is almost never true […] Needless to say, the police, protest organizers or fire officials to whom reporters address their questions about crowd sizes almost never do any of that – they have jobs to do. Instead, they use what George Berkeley, chief of public affairs for the National Park Service in Washington, used to call SWAG (scientific wild-ass guess) […] Let’s not use numbers that are simply someone’s guess. Unless there is good reason to believe that we have a real, scientific crowd count, it’s best to simply give an order of magnitude: tens, hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands. What we give up in fake precision, we’ll gain in actual accuracy.

Attendance estimation – academic literature

Attendance estimation methods

In the late 1960s, there were several student protests at the University of California Berkeley and Herbert Jacobs, a retired Journalist teaching classes at that institution, not in agreement with the
reported crowd figures, created one of the earliest scientific methods to estimate attendance numbers (Jacobs, 1967). This method used gridded aerial photographs of protestors to determine on average how many people were in each grid by understanding how many square feet they occupied. Jacobs deduced that people at arm’s length filled 10.5 square feet, closer about 4.5 square feet, and packed as tightly as possible, 2.5 square feet per person. A proponent of this method used it to estimate crowds at Miami’s annual Calle Ocho street festival at a maximum of 175,000 vs the usually reported 1m and for the Pope’s 1987 motorcade in the same city at an utmost of 40,000 instead of a reported 250,000 (Doig, 2009). Doig contended that with applications such as Google Earth, outdoor event areas can be easily measured and attendance calculated.

Another early method to determine attendance at non-gated events was distributed in the 1970s by the Indiana Department of Commerce and the Indiana State Festival Association (Getz, 1997). Derived from a system used by police to estimate vehicular traffic, this method first divides an event into defined areas of approximately equal size with one of these being selected as a test site area. The number of people located within this test site area is counted at three different times during the event. The three counts are averaged and multiplied by the total number of defined areas to determine an amount of people thought to be in attendance at the event during a single point in time. Second, attendees are surveyed to determine the length of time they stayed at the event. These times are averaged with that result divided into the total event hours to ascertain a crowd turnover rate. Finally, the figure for the number of people at a single point in time is multiplied by the crowd turnover rate to determine the total event attendance. No examples of actual events having used this method to estimate attendance were uncovered.

Researchers have tested schemes adapted from wildlife managers to estimate attendance at large open festivals. A tag and recapture method was undertaken at the Summerfest festival in Historic York, South Carolina, USA (Brothers and Brantley, 1993). The method involved tagging 500 random attendees with buttons as they entered, allowing them to mix into the crowd, and then counting both the tagged and untagged visitors as they crossed lines at four locations. In theory the ratio of people counted with tags compared to those without tags should be equivalent to the ratio of people tagged at the entrance to the total in attendance at the event. No examples of events having used this method were uncovered. A second method that had been used to count large mammals in the wild was customized to estimate the crowd at the Wintersun Festival in Coolangatta, Queensland, Australia (Raybould et al., 2000). A detailed map of the festival site divided into zones sequenced with aerial pictures of the crowd taken at peak attendance times over two days was combined with data from a visitor survey to arrive at attendance estimates of both total two-day crowd size and a lesser individual total visitor count. Although no other events were found to have used this exact method there were many examples of some form of aerial photography.

The importance of accurate attendance for the purpose of economic impact assessment has been well documented. Several academic articles and studies on the subject (Burgen and Mules, 1992; Crompton and McKay, 1994; Dengha et al., 2009; Denton and Furse, 1993; Murphy and Carmichael, 1991; Streich et al., 2003; Shuai, 2015; Tyrrell and Ismail, 2005; Tyrrell and Johnston, 2002) have suggested numerous ways of triangulation with varying combinations of survey data, zone counts, statistical probability, observation and other sources of information as estimation methods. Although these methods show promise, there remains no standard method to estimate the attendance variable for economic impact studies.

A conceptual model of how to estimate attendance at a parade proposed by Getz (1997) suggested one survey the route prior to the parade, divide the route into zones, identify zones that may attract higher or lower spectators, count people in a random selection of zones, average the counted crowd size in the selected zones and finally multiply that average by the total number of zones to arrive at a final total. In 2010 research on two major parades using identical routes in Phoenix, Arizona was undertaken using this method in combination with the Jacobs method mentioned above (Biaett and Hultsman, 2015). Prior to the parades, the researchers conducted experiments to gain an understanding of how many square feet per person would be required for standing and sitting spectators. Using a 100 square foot area they were able to consistently squeeze in about 60 people maximum, however, this density of 1.66 square feet per person could not be maintained for more than 2 min. Observing that 25 people in the 100 square foot area naturally arranged themselves in a sustainable pattern of five rows of five people it was
determined that a space of 4 square feet per standing spectator was required. Similar experiments with people sitting in lawn chairs ascertained that sitting spectators required 8.5 square feet per person. Next the researchers measured the square footage of available space for spectators along the route and arrived at maximum possible squished, sustainable standing and sitting spectator attendance for the parade route. During the parade six researchers hand counted spectators in randomly selected blocks while another researcher walked in front of the parade for the entire route estimating crowd density for all blocks. When 62 hand counted sections were compared to their density estimated counterpart, 60 of them were found to be within a 0.05 margin of error indicating the estimation of attendance with density counts as a valid method. The parades, which had previously been estimated at 200,000 and 300,000 spectators, were found to actually have only 14,000 and 39,000, respectively. There are no examples of others using this method to determine attendance at a parade.

A number of additional ideas have been advocated through the years to assist with an estimate of attendance at festivals and events. These have included to weigh the collected trash, measure the waste in the porta-potties, count the amount of food, beverage and souvenirs sold, use cellular phone data, and to monitor merchant sales and traffic counts adjacent to the event site among other things. Most recently geofencing technology has been used at festivals and events to track the number of participants signed in on their smart phones. While this does not create a total attendance figure, it can be used as a hard count to be used with exit survey data.

Content analysis

In a journal article which researched and proposed a method to estimate attendance and economic impact at open-gate festivals it was reported that although the subject of attendance estimation had been investigated on multiple previous occasions “a shortcoming in the literature on community festivals appears to be the lack of structured methodology in estimating attendance” (Tyrrell and Ismail, 2005, p. 111). Extending this revelation through 2018 has now uncovered that the specific topic of estimating attendance at events had appeared in academic literature as a principle theme at least 23 times since 1990, yet there still has not emerged a single established or widely accepted method to estimate attendance at festivals and events. To investigate the topic trends of event management research, Park and Park (2016) conducted a content analysis on the titles of 463 research articles in four event management academic journals (Event Management, Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, International Journal of Event and Festival Management and International Journal of Event Management Research) and 78 research articles in four top-tier publications in tourism and hospitality (Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Travel Research, International Journal of Hospitality Management and Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research) published between 1993 and 2013. This study reported the word “attendance” ranked as the 23rd most mentioned word within the top 30 significant words mentioned in the title of event journal articles, being found 18 times with a frequency of 1.54 percent. It was not included at all in the list of top 30 significant words in the tourism and hospitality journals. The words ethics and morals failed to make either list, although the words economic, social and impact were ranked in the top half of both lists. The topic of attendance was reported to be among subjects continuing to be actively investigated in current research.

This paper focuses on the ethical conundrum that currently engulfs the estimation of attendance. To develop a deeper contextual understanding surrounding the general inquiry of attendance estimation, research, in the form of a content analysis, was conducted to explore popular media as well as academic literature for possible correlations with concerns for corporate social responsibility and ethical behavior. Knowing that the search for a standard method of estimating attendance for festivals and events remains of ongoing interest it was deemed of importance to determine if thoughts of moral conduct, duty and judgment were also a part of the mix.

Content analysis began with an examination of the actual narrative of the 18 attendance articles referenced above (Park and Park, 2016). A list of article titles was not provided as part of the Park and Park article, but using their date range and the names of academic journals included in the study a list of 18 attendance articles was fairly easy to compile through an online database search.
and presumed to be correct. Content analysis research employing the Provalis Research QDA Miner Lite tool was conducted on both the abstract and body of each journal article, excluding references. These narratives were searched for the keywords “ethics,” “morals” and “corporate social responsibility” along with common derivatives. In all of the 18 attendance articles analyzed the terms failed to surface. Five additional academic journal articles that addressed the issue of festival and event attendance, outside the scope of the Park and Park study, were uncovered through supplementary searches of online databases. A similar content analysis was conducted on these articles and in only a single instance, “Analytically Estimating Crowd Attendance at a Parade” (Blaett and Hultsman, 2015, p. 151) were the words “ethically” and “morally” a part of the dialog, and then only as a very brief, inconsequential, descriptive mention.

Selected articles from popular media were similarly subjected to content analysis to research possible correlations between the concepts of ethics and attendance. The analysis included 1,340 articles about festivals and events that were reprinted between October 23, 2014 and October 27, 2016 as part of the International Festival and Event Association’s online weekly newsletter Event Insider. While this obviously did not include every possible popular media story on festivals and events during that time period, it was determined that it was a convenient and representative sample with 58 percent of narratives from the USA and 42 percent from other countries. The Provalis Research QDA Miner Lite tool word search function was again employed to first search for the words “attendance” and “crowd,” as well as their derivations, in the article titles. In 83 instances, or in 6.9 percent of all titles searched, these words were discovered. A deeper search into the content of these 83 stories was then conducted searching for the words “ethics,” “morals” and “corporate social responsibility,” along with their derivatives, but in no instance did those words emerge. To gain an understanding if a more general idea of professional ethics was of concern in any aspect of festivals and events a manual review of all 1,340 articles was undertaken. The words ethics, morals and corporate social responsibility, and their derivatives, were found in only a single story, an article that addressed “immoral” sponsorships. There did appear, however, to be somewhat of a non-specified casual interest in the subject matter in 36 identified instances, or 2.8 percent of articles reviewed, on issues that ranged from concern for animal to gun rights, from the environment to accessibility, from security and privacy to safe drug use and health risks, and more. This research was limited by the type and amount of literature examined by content analysis. It could have been expanded into more than those with a primary focus on tourism and events, possibly into social psychology, human geography, leisure studies or other journals that may possibly also explore the subject of attendance estimation at events. Similarly, the type and number of popular media articles could also have been expanded to add more depth to the study. With the results from the content analysis being highly significant; however, it is believed that what was examined was sufficient for the purposes of this project.

Conclusions and implications

For many decades, the estimation of crowd size at festivals and events has been an ethical conundrum as organizers, police agencies, journalists and others have, in general, failed in their corporate social responsibility to report accurately estimated and documented attendance figures. Economic impact assessments as well as studies on the influence of festivals and events to generate social, culture and political capital have consequentially been compromised. Community resources have been wasted and without doubt community attitudes and beliefs have been inequitably influenced. False and inflated attendance figures have inadvertently or deliberately deceived and possibly defrauded sponsors and other festival and event stakeholders. A justification of situational ethics is in fact unjustified and serves only to demonstrate an overall lack of understanding about the true meaning of integrity in terms of ethics and corporate social responsibility.

From content analysis research of academic journal articles conducted for this project it can be concluded that the subject of ethics or corporate social responsibility has not been of particular interest to those who have researched the topic of attendance estimation at festivals and events during the past 25 years. Although 23 studies were identified that addressed the specifics of attendance at festivals and events, several of which having actually tested estimation methods, in only a single instance did the idea of ethics or morals emerge, and then only inconsequentially. Attendance counts are obviously recognized as a significant variable in event management
research, especially for economic impact studies, but there appears to be no professed correlation between interest in potential estimation methods and the topic of ethics.

The content analysis of festival and event attendance in the popular media conducted for this project lead to the additional conclusion that although the issue of ethical festival and event professionalism behavior appeared to be of non-specified casual interest on a variety of subjects, the issue of ethical attendance counts was not included in the mix. In the past, attendance counts at festivals and events, especially parades and political events, have been challenged as fact, but there appears little, if no concern, that it has occurred because of a violation of professional ethics.

Over the past three decades a variety of estimation methods have been proposed with some field tested. Crowd size at events has been calculated using many approaches, but the estimation of attendance at festivals and events has largely remained an agenda-driven guestimate primarily because a standard method of estimation has yet to be agreed upon or established. An ongoing problem with estimating attendance at festivals and events is that instead of a proactive process it has typically been unplanned and reactive, which led to hurried and ineffective, after the fact, on the spot conjecture. Bringing validity and trustworthiness into the estimation of attendance at festivals and events must become more consistent if the true impacts (economic, social and environmental) of events are to be known. Without honest assessment there is no guarantee that valuable resources provided to support events, as well as community benefits, will be correctly allocated. There is no need for future research on the topic of estimating attendance at festivals and events.

At this time it is proposed that some simple methods be adopted to estimate attendance at festivals and events. First, when possible, the process of estimating attendance at festivals and events should completed by an independent party to avoid potential conflicts of interest and bias.

Second, we must have control data to prevent over estimation. Event sites must be measured to determine their total square footage, which divided by 4 will roughly determine the maximum possible attendance at any given time. The event site could be further divided into nodes or grids to understand possible attendance concentrations in specific areas. The total number of people that can arrive at the event site must also be determined. How many parking places are available, how many spots are available on public transit, how many people live close enough to travel on foot to the event? Understanding how many people can actually occupy the event space and actually get to the event site are the primary data needed to control over estimation.

Next, exit or departure crowd surveys must be made to collect hard count data on something such as the use of event phone apps, arrival by public transportation or food and beverage purchased that can then be correlated to actual total numbers for these data (how many total people did a geofence catch, rode transit and bought food) to extrapolate estimated attendance. For example, if 5 out of every 10 people surveyed reported they arrived by public transportation and public transportation authorities reported 1,000 passengers, it could be extrapolated that 2,000 people attended the event. Bringing validity and trustworthiness back into the estimation of attendance at festivals and events must entail a three-step process: decide in advance what methods will be used and what data will be collected; collect the necessary data pre-event, during the event and post event; and analyze the data at the conclusion of the event to arrive at a final total. And finally, and most importantly, those doing the estimating must be ethical and do it honestly with integrity, accepting their corporate social responsibility to be good citizens. With these crucial elements of the puzzle put into place, the ethical conundrum of estimating attendance at festivals and events will subside.

References


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Touring for peace: the role of dual-narrative tours in creating transnational activists

Emily Maureen Schneider

Abstract
Purpose – Scholarship on the contact hypothesis and peacebuilding suggests that contact with marginalized ethnic and racial groups may reduce prejudice and improve opportunities for conflict resolution. Through a study of dual-narrative tours to Israel/Palestine, the purpose of this paper is to address two areas of the debate surrounding this approach to social change. First, past research on the effectiveness of contact-based tourism as a method to change attitudes is inconclusive. Travel to a foreign country has been shown to both improve and worsen tourists’ perceptions of a host population. Second, few scholars have attempted to link contact-based changes in attitudes to activism.

Design/methodology/approach – Through an analysis of 218 post-tour surveys, this study examines the role of dual-narrative tours in sparking attitude change that may facilitate involvement in peace and justice activism. Surveys were collected from the leading “dual-narrative” tour company in the region, MEJDI. Dual-narrative tours uniquely expose mainstream tourists in Israel/Palestine to Palestinian perspectives that are typically absent from the majority of tours to the region. This case study of dual-narrative tours therefore provides a unique opportunity to address the self-selecting bias, as identified by contact hypothesis and tourism scholars, in order to understand the potential impacts of exposure to marginalized narratives.

Findings – The findings of this study suggest that while these tours tend to engender increased support for Palestinians over Israelis, their most salient function appears to be the cultivation of empathy for “both sides” of the conflict. Similarly, dual-narrative tours often prompt visitors to understand the conflict to be more complex than they previously thought. In terms of activism, tourists tend to prioritize education-based initiatives in their plans for post-tour political engagement. In addition, a large number of participants articulated commitments to support joint Israeli–Palestinian non-governmental organizations and to try to influence US foreign policy to be more equitable.

Originality/value – These findings complicate debates within the scholarship on peacebuilding as well as within movements for social justice in Israel/Palestine. While programs that equate Israeli and Palestinian perspectives are often criticized for reinforcing the status quo, dual-narrative tours appear to facilitate nuance and universalism while also shifting tourists toward greater identification with an oppressed population. Together, these findings shed light on the ability of tourism to facilitate positive attitude change about a previously stigmatized racial/ethnic group, as well as the power of contact and exposure to marginalized narratives to inspire peace and justice activism.

Keywords Attitude, Activism, Social change, Alternative tourism, Israel/Palestine, Justice tourism

Mainstream tours to Israel and alternative tours to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) offer vastly different accounts of the same piece of land. Most tours to the region, run primarily by Israeli companies, emphasize themes such as the Jewish people’s ancient connection to the land, the constant threat of terrorism from Israel’s Arab neighbors and how Israel is at the forefront of technological innovation and liberalism in the Middle East (Abu El-Haj, 2001; Kassis et al., 2016; Kelner, 2010). Alternative tourism, on the other hand, tends to highlight the hardships of life for Palestinians living under military occupation, the hundreds of checkpoints, roadblocks and closures that impede Palestinian movement, as well as ongoing confiscation of Palestinian land (Kassis et al., 2016; Kelly, 2016). Travelers to the region are therefore exposed to dramatically different representations of the “conflict” depending on whether their tour guide employs dominant Israeli or Palestinian narratives.
This study offers insight into what happens when tourists hear both Israeli and Palestinian narratives on the same tour. Since Palestinian accounts of the occupation are excluded from most tourism platforms, this study explores the outcomes of exposing travelers to voices that would not usually be included on a mainstream tourist experience. Through an analysis of post-tour surveys from MEJDI, a “dual-narrative [1]” tour company that guides tourists through the region with both an Israeli and Palestinian guide, this study sheds light on the power of narrative to shift individuals’ political opinions and to motivate them to become involved in peace and justice activism.

MEJDI was founded in 2009 by a Palestinian and a Jewish American who shared an interest in using tourism to fight stereotypes and promote social engagement. With over a billion people traveling each year, the two entrepreneurs, who today serve as MEJDI’s co-CEOs, realized that tourism was a largely untapped resource to promote peacebuilding and social change. The pair concluded that while international development work lacked financial sustainability and that the alternative tourism sector could only reach a limited clientele, MEJDI’s model would attract a diverse audience and allow for financial independence. Through their unique approach, MEJDI has been able to recruit mainstream tourists, who diverge both ideologically and demographically, from the typical tourist who travels to the OPT. As such, the sample for this study consists of 218 respondents who are representative of mainstream tourists to Israel. In line with the Israeli Ministry of Tourism’s statistics on travelers to Israel (www.gov.il/en/Departments/ministry_of_tourism), the majority of respondents surveyed were part of church groups and synagogues, and were motivated to attend the tour for religious rather than political reasons. Therefore, rather than represent typical travelers to the OPT, who often travel independently to support the Palestinian cause, the tourists sampled in this study were affiliated with mainstream institutions and were primarily motivated by “apolitical” reasons, most notably, visiting religious sites (Belhassen et al., 2014; Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000; Richter, 1983).

Since its founding, MEJDI has expanded beyond tours to Israel/Palestine to include destinations around the world such as Cuba, Ireland and Oman. Still, MEJDI’s flagship program continues to be its dual-narrative tours to Israel/Palestine, which regularly bring synagogues, church groups, interfaith delegations and university groups to the region. Mainstream tours to Israel often employ a calculated form of diversity rooted in MacCannell’s (1976) “staged authenticity,” whereby the illusion of diversity is strategically presented on tours in ways that do not disrupt, and may even strengthen, mainstream political narratives. MEJDI, however, is distinct in that it more fully exposes tourists to marginalized perspectives through its dual-narrative framework. Participants are led throughout sites in both Israel and the OPT by Israeli and Palestinian guides who uniquely enjoy equal status on the tour. In addition, tourists meet with a wide array of speakers from a range of political and religious perspectives. For example, MEJDI’s contacts include joint Israeli–Palestinian organizations such as the Parents Circle, Israeli human rights groups like Rabbis for Human Rights, Palestinian resistance projects like Tent of Nations, social justice non-governmental organization (NGOs) such as Ir Amim, mainstream Jewish groups like Pardes, representatives of the settler movement such as the Yesha Council, and prominent grassroots Palestinian activists such as Bassam al Tamimi. By bringing mainstream tourists into contact with these organizations and activists, MEJDI uniquely exposes people from outside the typical alternative tourism network to perspectives that are rarely heard on mainstream tours. MEJDI tours therefore offer a revealing case to examine the ways that exposure to marginalized perspectives may impact individuals, who did not enter the tour with preexisting sympathy toward the Palestinian cause. As such, this case study offers a valuable platform to evaluate tourism’s ability to facilitate transnational commitments to a just peace in the region.

1. **Ideological tourism in Israel/Palestine**

In his discussion of external bystanders to atrocities, Cohen (2001) charges both Israelis and Palestinians with promoting observer denial among tourists to support their own political agendas. On the Palestinian “side,” Cohen criticizes travelers to the Palestinian territories for only seeking information that reinforces their previous political positions. He claims that many of these tourists refuse to visit Israeli communities, avoid meaningful engagement with Israeli political
culture, and are afraid to air their “dirty laundry.” On the Israeli “side,” Cohen lambasts Jewish-American tourists who are critical of human rights abuses in other parts of the world, but justify the suffering of Palestinians by adhering to a problematic narrative of Jewish victimhood.

As Gutman (2017, p. 9) describes, “each side casts its own people as both the victim and the hero and the other side as the villain or perpetrator, inciting one national identity and history against the other.” Israeli guides employ this sense of victimhood-heroism to direct tourists’ emotions and connections to Judaism toward a nationalistic sense of Jewish peoplehood. For example, Abu El-Haj (2001) describes how tour guides will offer historically inaccurate representations of key sites, such as the Tower of David/Jerusalem Citadel, in order to promote strategic narratives of Jewish nationalism. In addition, Israeli tour guides often highlight Israel’s accomplishments on selected progressive issues, such as its purported tolerance of homosexuality (a tactic, commonly referred to as “pink-washing”) in order to distract tourists from Israel’s treatment of Palestinians (Butler, 2009).

Together these strategies produce what Cohen (2001) calls “cultural denial.” Tourists on mainstream tours to Israel begin to understand the region through a specific narrative that emphasizes Israel’s moral superiority in order to deny Israel’s oppression of Palestinians. Though mainstream tours to Israel often present themselves as neutral, Israeli narratives of the conflict are routinely prioritized, largely because the Israeli state maintains control over the tourism industry through a system of licenses and permits that stifles Palestinian competition with Israeli guides (Bowman, 1992). In the face of this repression and exclusion, a growing subset of alternative tours, commonly referred to as “justice tours,” are using tourism to challenge the Israeli state’s domination of how the conflict is portrayed to foreign visitors (Brin, 2006; Isaac, 2009; Isaac et al., 2016; Kelly, 2016). Justice tourism is often organized by marginalized groups and social justice advocates, who use tourism as a tool to raise awareness and encourage political activism. While justice tourism is organized by both Palestinian and Israeli activists, Palestinians face far greater risks for this form of activism compared to Israelis. As Gutman (2017, p. 63) describes:

The experience of Palestinian memory activists in Israel is different from that of Jewish Israelis, whose collective memory is dominant and institutionalized in Israel. As high as the costs and risks of exclusion from Israeli society are for Jewish Israeli memory activists who remember Palestinian suffering, they are even higher for Palestinian citizens, who are already excluded and are therefore more exposed to formal and informal state sanctions. Their efforts are perceived as a memory war against the state’s silencing and denial.

Justice tours seek to amplify Palestinian perspectives and to expose tourists to the impacts of Israel’s military rule in the West Bank as well as current and historical markers of oppression inside Israel-proper. Yet despite the existence of these tours, mainstream tourists rarely attend justice tours. On all ends of the political spectrum, tourists tend to participate in tours that align with their beliefs. As Belhassen and Ebel (2009, p. 360) explain:

[T]ourism systems and practices reflect circumstances of social, cultural, or economic inequalities. Accordingly, tourism practices, policies, and services are all viewed as social mechanisms that serve to maintain and protect the conditions that correspond with an ideology that a tourism actor seeks to promote.

Richter (1983, p. 330) argues that solidarity tourists arrive to their destinations with preconceived political sympathies, and that their “specific itineraries might be viewed as representing ideological values of the tourists and their political convictions and beliefs.” Similarly, scholars such as Clarke (2000) and Brin (2006) relegate justice/solidarity tourism to a type of politically-biased propaganda. In addition, scholars are critical of this type of tourism’s tendency to turn the host population’s suffering into a spectacle for privileged foreigners (Leite and Graburn, 2009).

On the other hand, Blanchard and Higgins-Desbiolles (2013) and Moufakkir and Kelly (2010) outline the ways that such forms of tourism can inspire hope and promote peace. According to Scheyvens (2002), justice tourism builds solidarity between hosts and visitors, supports local communities’ self-determination and promotes mutual understanding, equitable relationships and respect. For example, Gutman (2017) details how traditional forms of Israeli tourism are being appropriated and redeployed to educate Israelis about the Nakba. Through what she deems “memory activism,” the tour platform is used to communicate counter-hegemonic narratives to
influence policy and public discourse. However, Gutman also describes how these tours sometimes employ a tactical depoliticization that can then lead some participants to embrace the tours’ depoliticized appearances. She argues that while these tours effectively repurpose a familiar cultural practice to disseminate oppositional knowledge, culturally legible tourism as a medium for activism may amplify or hinder the distribution of this knowledge.

In addition to educating tourists, justice tours are also thought to stimulate local economies and help alleviate poverty. For example, the Alternative Tourism Group, a Palestinian NGO, operates based on a justice tourism platform, that is “tourism that holds as its central goals the creation of economic opportunities for the local community, positive cultural exchange between guest and host through one-on-one interaction, the protection of the environment, and political/historical education” (Blanchard and Higgins-Desbiolles, 2013, p. 64). Despite the complexities that scholars such as Gutman (2017) raise, practitioners on the ground such as the ATG are passionate about the power of tourism to change minds and recruit international activists. As ATG’s Executive Director remarks, “a visitor who follows such an itinerary will naturally develop a deep and profound understanding of the Palestinian condition and what solidarity entails” (Kassis et al., 2016, p. 49).

The goal of this study is to delve deeper into the assumption that tourists who visit Palestinian communities in the West Bank will “naturally” learn what solidarity entails after seeing the occupation first-hand and hearing from Palestinians directly. As Gutman (2017) argues, such encounters may bring more confusion than clarity for tourists, which arguably hinders political solidarity with Palestinians. Furthermore, most studies of Palestinian-centric justice tourism focus on organizations that attract participants who are already sympathetic to Palestinian claims (Kelly, 2016; Gutman, 2017). MEJDI, however, recruits tourists who are representative of mainstream tourists to Israel, and is therefore in a unique position to expose such tourists to counter-hegemonic narratives from Palestinians in the OPT. In this way, this study serves as a lens into understanding tourism’s potential to contribute to transnational peace and justice activism by investigating what happens when travelers, who were not previously sympathetic to Palestinian perspectives, are confronted with alternative narratives that complicate dominant representations of “the conflict.”

### 2. Tourism and attitude change

Past research remains inconclusive as to whether exposing tourists to alternative political narratives will in fact engender solidarity with an oppressed population. Activists and tourism advocates often assume that if travelers who are hostile to or skeptical of Palestinian claims met directly with Palestinians and witnessed human rights violations in places like the West Bank, that they would shift their political positions (Kassis et al., 2016). This view assumes that simply witnessing the Palestinians’ situation in the OPT will automatically transform tourists’ perceptions of the conflict. Such an outcome, however, is not suggested by the literature on tourism and attitude change, and such results have yet to be empirically demonstrated. This study aims to provide insight into this assumption by exploring tourists’ reactions to dual-narrative tours. By analyzing tourists’ responses to dual-narrative trips to Israel and the West Bank, this study contributes to the limited literature on what happens when tourists are confronted with new information and concrete experiences that contradict their previously held beliefs.

Past research suggests that simply traveling to a foreign country does not guarantee an increase in positive attitudes toward the host population (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Grothe, 1970; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991). A number of studies found that when tourists travel to states with which the tourists’ home country has negative relations, negative perceptions are more likely to intensify than to become positive (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991). One exception is Grothe’s (1970) study of American tourists who traveled to the Soviet Union. Upon returning home, the Americans expressed more positive thoughts about the host country’s population, however their perception of the government worsened. In other words, the “people-good, government-bad” dichotomy was greater after the trip. This suggests that even when tourists develop more positive views toward a “hostile” country’s population, they are likely to remain critical of its government and policies.
These findings can be partly attributed to the psychological theories of confirmation bias and cognitive dissonance. Confirmation bias refers to the phenomenon of individuals selectively processing information that confirms their beliefs, while cognitive dissonance refers to the process by which individuals ignore information that contradicts their beliefs. Early sociologists such as Veblen (1899) noted humans’ orientation toward preserving customs as opposed to embracing change. Psychologists of the early 1900s, such as Lewis and McDougall (1908) agreed that the mind is geared toward habit and imitation rather than transformation. As Jost (2015, p. 609) explains of Lewin’s approach, “resistance to change stems from the fact that we value the groups to which we belong, and therefore changing our attitudes or behavior is tantamount to leaving the comfortable embrace of a social reality of which we are part.” Lewin’s student, Festinger (1957) coined the term “cognitive dissonance,” which asserts that individuals seek out information that confirms their preexisting views and avoid information that contradicts them. Tourists are therefore likely to travel to sites that reinforce their preexisting beliefs and adhere to a process of “selective exposure.” This process is arguably heightened in the context of tourism, since international travel requires significant amounts of time and money. Based on the understanding that people tend to seek information that confirms their existing ideologies and social positions, individuals are unlikely to invest resources in experiences that will drastically challenge their political views and identities.

Theories surrounding tourism and attitude change are largely based in Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis, which holds that intergroup contact tends to cause positive shifts in group members’ perceptions of each other. Several studies have identified that in order for this type of positive attitude change to occur, five factors need to be in place (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998):

1. equal-status contact;
2. intergroup cooperation toward a common goal;
3. intimate rather than casual contact;
4. an authority and/or social climate that supports intergroup contact; and
5. initial intergroup attitudes that are not extremely negative.

Pizam et al. (2002) tested these five conditions of the contact hypothesis to see whether they were effective in creating positive attitude change through tourism. They measured the pre- and post-trip attitudes of Israelis on an eco-tourism trip to Jordan, two countries characterized by hostile relations despite a peace treaty between the two governments. The tour used for their study met all but the first condition, since prior to the trip, Israelis perceived themselves to be superior to their Jordanian hosts. In contrast to the earlier studies, Pizam et al. (2002) found that the Israeli tourists experienced a high number of attitudinal changes, all of which were positive. Unlike the previously discussed tours to “enemy” countries, this particular tour was specifically designed to meet the conditions of the contact hypothesis, which likely caused it to spark positive attitude changes among its participants.

Still, studies such as Pizam et al.’s (2002) relied on primarily quantitative measures to demonstrate that tourists’ perceptions of host populations improve after traveling to a previously stigmatized destination. This operationalization of improved perceptions leaves little room for understanding the nuances and complexities of these shifts in tourists’ thinking. Furthermore, these studies treat positive perceptions as a measurable goal in and of themselves, rather than critically examining the role of transformative interpersonal experiences within social movements for peace and justice. This paper therefore goes beyond determining whether tourism facilitates improved perceptions of the host country, and instead provides an analysis of the types of shifts in thinking that these tours produce, as well as the consequences of these shifts in terms of transnationalism activism.

3. Methods

3.1 Case selection

In order to better understand tourism’s potential to shift participants’ thinking on highly politicized issues, surveys were collected from MEJDI, a prominent “dual-narrative” tour company in Israel/Palestine. As opposed to most tours to the region, where participants who
identify with Israeli narratives hire Israeli guides and vice versa, the tours analyzed for this study are led by both a Palestinian and an Israeli tour guide. In an interview with a leading staff member from MEJDI, he explained how prior to MEJDI, the extent of “dual-narrative” tours involved one tour guide handing off the tour group to a different tour guide, which translated into Israelis guiding tour groups through “Israeli” sites, and Palestinian guides guiding groups through “Palestinian” sites. Feeling that this model did not do enough to create a “more peaceful and interconnected world through travel,” MEJDI developed a tour-guiding model that would allow travelers who “typically will come to the region and only hear one story,” to hear a multitude of stories. Given the divisive politics of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the barriers to movement in the region, MEJDI developed the model of two tour guides (one Israeli, one Palestinian) guiding in tandem, supplemented by a variety of experiences and diverse speakers. As a leading staff member at MEJDI explained, MEJDI guides are trained to:

[… ] share their own opinions, their biases, their personal stories, family histories. And to do that while also sharing with the groups that these are their personal opinions and biases and not to state them as fact. And to also share, within the context of their own perspective, a few other dominant narratives and general worldviews within their respective societies.

Guides are therefore encouraged to communicate the dominant narratives of their communities, which exposes tourists to diverse, sometimes even oppositional accounts of tourist sites on the same itinerary.

The tour groups surveyed for this study were made up of mainstream American churches, universities, interfaith programs and synagogues. Itineraries from the past five years were analyzed in order to confirm that MEJDI tours generally visit the same key locations and include similar activities. MEJDI tours to Israel/Palestine typically consist of visits to religious sites from the three major religions of the region, including the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In addition, tour groups meet with members of social change organizations, ranging from organizations like Tsopf, which focuses on integrating Palestinians into Israeli society to those that promote a more radical, binational approach to shared living such as Neve Shalom-Wahat al Salaam. Participants also meet with prominent, joint Israeli–Palestinian NGOs such as Combatants for Peace as well as internal Palestinian and Israeli initiatives such as Hope Flowers School. Though unique in their specific objectives and strategies, each of these groups aim to promote human rights and secure a just peace through nonviolent methods. Tours also include visits to important political and historical sites such as Rabin Square, the Mahmoud Darwish Museum, Yad Vashem and the Israeli Knesset (including meetings with both Israeli and Palestinian MKs), as well as a meal in the home of both a local Palestinian and Jewish family.

By analyzing respondents’ reactions to these tours, this study explores tourism’s ability to shift attitudes and motivate actions on behalf of peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. Specifically, this paper goes beyond quantitative measures of attitude change that reduce participants’ responses to standardized options, and instead uses qualitative, content analysis to investigate the nuances and complexities of attitude change on a deeper level. Furthermore, this study situates those responses in relation to wider considerations regarding tourism’s role in building transnational movements for peace. The specific case of dual-narrative tours offers a particularly effective framework for the study of this topic, since dual-narrative tours more successfully avoid the “self-selecting” phenomenon in most justice tourism (Belhassen et al., 2014; Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000; Richter, 1993; Pettigrew, 1998). Participants are directly confronted with dominant Israeli and Palestinian narratives of the conflict and are therefore forced to grapple with perspectives that challenge their own opinions. By analyzing this unique situation, of tour participants being experientially confronted with new information and social contact that challenges their previous perceptions, this study advances the sociological literature on the power of contact, and more specifically, tourism, to foster transnational solidarity.

Specifically, this study asks, “how do mainstream tourists to Israel/Palestine react to information that contradicts their previous opinions about the conflict?” This question provides a window into the broader research question of:

RQ1. How do individuals respond to contact-based experiences that challenge their political positions?
I answer these questions through the use of content analysis to determine recurrent themes in participants’ responses to an open-ended survey about their trip experiences. Rather than aim to determine simply if participants’ attitudes change, this study focuses on the nuances, complexities and themes within apparent shifts in participants’ attitudes. I then situate these themes within the following research question:

*RQ2.* What are the implications of the dominant themes in participants’ reactions to these tours in terms of building transnational movements for peace and justice?

### 3.2 Data collection

The findings for this study are based on 218 internal, post-tour surveys from tourists following their participation in a dual-narrative tour with MEJDI. Respondents were surveyed from 40 separate MEJDI tours with similar itineraries, all of which took place between October 2014 and April 2017. The use of internal surveys proved to be beneficial for the aims of this study, as this method provided a series of standardized feedback from participants over the course of several years. Surveys were typically sent out one week after participants returned from Israel/Palestine, and were completed online by individual tour participants. As a result, these surveys primarily measure participants’ immediate reactions to the tour rather than provide a tool to assess long-term effects. Though immediate responses may be problematic in determining the long-term impacts of these tours, they provide a more accurate representation of the tourists’ unmediated reactions to their trips. First, tourists’ memories of the tour’s events are clearer and therefore more reliable immediately following the tour. Second, immediate responses also suggest that shifts in tourists’ thinking were not due to other events besides the tour.

Surveys asked participants a number of logistical and customer satisfaction questions, as well as two open-ended questions to measure the tours’ impact on participants’ attitudes and political views. The two questions, which provide the primary data for this study, read:

1. Have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?
2. In what ways can people help promote peace between the Israelis and Palestinians?

Responses to these two “impact” questions were compiled in a database along with answers to demographic questions including gender, age and type of trip (synagogue, church, university, etc.).

Survey responses were solicited from every participant on the tours, with around a 30 percent response rate. This response rate suggests that the results of this study may be skewed toward representing participants with the strongest reactions to the tour, as participants who took the time to fill out the post-trip survey may have experienced more profound reactions to the tour and were thus motivated to share their reflections. However, even if the data exclusively represent how tourists, who feel impacted by the trip, describe their experiences; this is still a useful point of analysis since a primary aim of this study is to understand how impacted participants relay their impressions of Israel/Palestine to others. Past studies have demonstrated that tourism, under the conditions of the contact hypothesis, produces changes in thinking toward the host population. However, few studies have looked deeper to determine how it affects tourists’ thinking, and none have then contextualized these reactions in terms of the role they may play in peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, regardless of whether the participants’ responses represent those of the more deeply affected participants, the critical analysis of themes within those responses is still helpful to understand the potential of these tours to contribute to transnational movements for peace and justice.

Participants’ qualitative, open-ended responses to the two impact questions were coded through an inductive approach that involved identifying relevant themes from the literature as well as recurrent language used by participants in their responses. Responses were coded by two separate coders, one the primary researcher and one a research assistant. The primary researcher is a Jewish-American woman who worked as a fundraiser from 2010 to 2012 for an NGO called Windows- Channels for Communication. As a staff member, she founded and directed an imitative to offer tours to Palestinian communities in the West Bank. Her positionality and previous professional experience allowed for the efficient identification of relevant themes, as
well as a deep familiarity with relevant locations, terms and political context. The research assistant is an African-American woman without a strong, personal relationship to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Their distinct positionalities and relationships to Israel/Palestine enhanced the value of working together to achieve inter-coder reliability and validity.

During the first stage of coding, both coders developed a long-list of codes that grew progressively as repeated themes and relevant references were identified in the participants’ answers. Codes were then collapsed to create a shorter list with a high level of exhaustiveness and validity. Each response was coded by the primary researcher and the research assistant. All discrepancies in coding were discussed in order to develop a final coding scheme. Codes were not mutually exclusive, as responses were often coded in multiple categories. Once each response was coded, codes were ranked by frequency in order to determine the most common reactions to the trip. In addition, a correlation matrix was run in order to determine if there were any significant links between various types of attitudes and actions prompted by the tour. Finally, responses were analyzed qualitatively for recurring themes and meaning.

Coding open-ended responses has a number of methodological advantages including a higher level of validity compared to surveys with multiple-choice questions (Visser et al., 2014). While in closed-ended questions, participants constrain their responses to preexisting categories, this method allows for participants to answer freely. As such, participants’ answers more accurately reflect their unique perceptions and opinions, rather than participants having to adjust them to fit into pre-defined categories. While closed-ended survey questions may be more appropriate for heavily researched topics, because this is the first study on the topic of dual-narrative tours in Israel/Palestine, coding of open-ended responses offered the most appropriate approach to understanding participants’ reactions to the tours. Furthermore, a content analysis of participants’ qualitative responses allows for a deeper investigation into the nuances, contradictions and dilemmas within participants’ reactions to the tours. As previously discussed, the aim of this study is not to determine if these tours change participants’ thinking. Instead, this paper provides an in-depth investigation into the dominant themes within participants’ reactions to the tours and then seeks to contextualize these themes within wider considerations of tourism’s role in activism and peacebuilding.

4. Findings

While the primary aim of this study is not to determine if the tours produce changes in participants’ attitudes, the data clearly suggest that they do. Of the 181 respondents who answered the question, “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?” only 13 (7 percent) stated that the tour did not cause them to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians, while the remaining 168 (93 percent) respondents were coded as having some change in thinking, including 45 participants who were coded as having a strong change. A “strong change” is characterized by any response that clearly states “yes” to the question and describes a concrete shift in the respondent’s thinking or enthusiastically declares that the tour had a major impact on the way the participant thought about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. For example:

Yes, I have definitely begun to think differently. Coming into this with the pro-Israel background that I experience in my local Jewish community, I realize that there is so much more to learn and that all is not so one-sided.

In general, MEJDI participants felt that the tour was free of bias, and that the dual-narrative framework helped them to see the conflict in new ways. For many, the tour was a way for them to “overcome” dominant representations of the conflict in the US media and other mediums that do not involve interpersonal contact. In particular, tourists noted the significance of meeting with “real people” who are dealing with “real issues.” For example:

Going to Israel was one of the best trips of my life. Seeing and experiencing the culture is something I will never forget. I often read about the conflict in the Middle East, always from a media source who more often not, wants you to perceive the situation from their point of view. This trip was anything but bias! One of the great aspects this trip was that it offered a dual narrative. I and others on the trip were
able to hear both sides of the conflict from people that lived and experienced it every day. This really challenged some of my own personal predispositions. It changed how I view the conflict as a whole. It allowed me to look past the arguments and see that there are real people dealing with real issues that most have no control over. It gives faces to a once faceless conflict. It gave me a new perspective, one that had I not gone on this trip I would have never been able to have.

In this way, the perceived authenticity of the tour experience was crucial to participants’ ability to shift their thinking. Having a “face” to the conflict, communicated a level of veracity that surpassed representations of the conflict from abroad. Often times, participants used this humanizing experience to reject stereotypes against Muslims and Arabs in the region. As one blogger wrote, “he brought a human face to the Palestinian Arab we too often see as the enemy out to destroy us.” In this sense, being physically present on the tours and interacting with both Israelis and Palestinians appeared to play a major role in participants’ attitudinal transformations, which for many, included a reduction of prejudice toward Palestinians.

Even among the 13 respondents who reported that the tour did not cause them to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians, the majority still appeared to be impacted by the tour. Nearly all of the responses that were coded as having no attitude change were also coded as stating that the tour either caused a deepening of previous views or reinforcement of previous beliefs. These types of responses were particularly common among respondents who were already involved in peacebuilding activities related to Israel/Palestine prior to the tour. For example, as one participant explained:

I have long been involved in the Israel/Palestinian conflict, have been active in a number of Jewish-American peace groups, and have previously visited the West Bank. So this trip did not change my views. If anything, it confirmed my growing feeling that a two-state solution is no longer possible.

MEJDI participants, such as the one above, who were already involved in activism related to Israel/Palestine prior to the trip, did not feel that the trip changed their views, but did experience a deepening of their opinions about the conflict. This suggests that the small number of people who reported that their thinking did not change can likely be attributed to the fact that they were already engaged with Israel/Palestine in a way that aligned with the perspectives presented on the tour.

In addition, by deepening participants’ views, the tours still appear to play a role in these participants’ potential involvement in peace and justice activism. For example, the tour appeared to increase the sense of urgency such respondents felt about resolving the conflict, to reaffirm participants’ commitments to their work on peacemaking in Israel/Palestine and to deepen participants’ compassion for and understandings of “both sides” of the conflict. As one participant answered to the question of whether they now think differently about Israelis and Palestinians:

If not differently, at least more deeply. I feel much more able to articulate both sides of the conflict and to reflect to my friends how deeply everyone suffers for this endless conflict. Making it so real gives voice and face and places to my feelings that we must find a way to spread peace.

In sum, when participants reported that the tour did not change their thinking, many were already involved in activities that aligned with the tour’s messaging. Beyond that, even if the participant stated that their thinking did not change, there appeared to be important developments in tourists’ perspectives on the conflict such as solidifying support for a one-state solution, helping them to feel confident in articulating their views on the conflict, or affirming their belief in targeting institutions, not people. The high number of respondents who felt strongly that the tour changed their views (n = 45) compared to the relatively low number for whom it had no effect (n = 13), suggests that participants are more likely to experience a perceived shift in thinking than not on MEJDI tours.

4.1 Sympathy for Palestinians, empathy for “both sides”

Among the 181 responses that expressed some type of change in thinking about Israelis and Palestinians, the most common theme within them (n = 41) was that participants now better understood and empathized with “both sides” of the conflict. These discussions of “both sides” typically involved participants reporting equal levels of criticism and support for both Israelis and Palestinians. For example, “I realized that both sides believe that they are right and justified,
and that to maintain their strong positions they do not allow themselves to open up and try to empathize with the other side,” and “both sides have a lot of forgiving that needs to be done and both need leaders that can help to make it happen.” These responses are rooted in a tendency to draw moral equivalency between Israelis and Palestinians, followed by a condemnation of the two groups’ inability to forgive, to share or to respect the other’s humanity. Such responses, that equated Israelis and Palestinians in this way, were the most common reactions to the trip. Accordingly, most responses did not indicate a clear shift from previously supporting one group to then supporting another, and instead explained that the tour prompted them to equally empathize with and/or be critical of both Israelis and Palestinians.

While the most common shift in participants’ thinking involved participants discussing “both sides” in equivalent terms, an only slightly lower number of the 181 participants, 36 as opposed to 41 (three codes overlapped with “both sides”), experienced increased identification with the group they were previously less sympathetic toward. These 36 participants entered the trip identifying with either Israelis or Palestinians, and left with a deeper appreciation for the other group they were previously less sympathetic toward. These 36 participants entered the trip identifying with either Israelis or Palestinians, and left with a deeper appreciation for the other group’s narrative. This is in contrast to the previously discussed 41 participants, whose primary conclusion from the tour was to equally support or criticize both Israelis and Palestinians. A shift in support for one “side” of the conflict was usually coupled with either a continued or lessened level of identification with the group that they previously supported. For example, in response to the question of “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?” one survey respondent wrote:

YES!! The trip opened my heart and expanded my perspective regarding what happens on each side of the wall. I am now more open to taking in the reality on each side of the divide. Being raised Jewish and with part of my family being lost in the Holocaust, I didn’t realize that I had a blockage into really seeing the Palestinian situation clearly. This trip softened that blockage so that I could see more of the reality of both sides of the divide. The wisdom and open-heartedness of the both the Palestinian and Israeli guide helped facilitate this opening.

As seen above, this woman experienced a clear shift in her perceptions of Palestinians. Her response was typical of the other 36 respondents, in that the majority appeared to shift from being exclusively supportive of Israelis to becoming more supportive of Palestinians. Of these 36 respondents who described shifting from previously supporting either Israelis or Palestinians to becoming more supportive of the other, 31 became more supportive of Palestinians, while only five indicated that they became more supportive of Israelis. Participants’ newfound support for Palestinians typically revolved around a reduction of anti-Arab prejudice and Islamophobia. For example, in response to the question of “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?” one survey respondent wrote, “Very definitely […] I now have immense sympathy for the bulk of the Palestinians and no longer see them as terrorists or would-be terrorists.”

Other participants however translated their sympathy for Palestinians into more structural, rights-based assessment of the conflict. For example, one participant wrote, “[t]his is my third trip and I’m becoming more and more sympathetic to the injustices suffered by Palestinians.” Even though the majority of participants’ shifts reflected a reduction in prejudice rather than awareness of institutional inequality, participants were regularly exposed to such perspectives. As one MEJDI tourist wrote:

We walked into a building and at the top of the entrance there was a sign that said, “the right of return is non-negotiable.” Inside of the building, there was a setup of chairs next to a poster that showed the gradual loss of Palestinian land since 1948. A cultural leader in the community soon came in, and stood before his crowd with the poster […] He also had a lot of interesting ideologies, some were a bit extreme, some were reasonable, but they were all understandable. The community leader had mentioned that the Palestinian people are not in a conflict, rather they are subject to colonization and occupation. He clearly feels that his people are being heavily victimized. Something that resonated with me was when he said that each religion in this region has a claim to Jerusalem and the lands around it, but it is not just for any one religion to monopolize this claim.

The participant describes the speaker’s deeply political ideology and counter-hegemonic narrative of the conflict. Yet despite the community leader’s focus on concepts such as colonialism and occupation, the tourist is instead drawn to his comments about the right of each religion in the region to have a claim to Jerusalem. While colonialism and occupation
squaresly put the blame on Israel, a recognition of all religion’s right to Jerusalem invokes sentiments of universality and a diffusion of responsibility. The participant goes on to delineate between the speaker’s “extreme” and “reasonable” positions, but notes that all of his positions were “understandable.” In this way, while MEJDI participants are regularly exposed to structural critiques of Israeli oppression that go beyond addressing stereotypes, most participants appeared to limit their ideological transformations to increased sympathy rather than more radical reconceptualizations of power and violence.

Though a minority (n = 5), a small number of participants indicated that they became more supportive of Israelis after the tour. The quote below demonstrates one participant’s shift toward a more supportive view of Israelis following the trip:

I think very differently. Seeing this conflict up close both verified and challenged so many of my previous thoughts […] interestingly, I felt more sympathy with the Israeli Jews than I did before going - that may be because I felt almost no sympathy prior to going, but the Israeli narrative of having no options besides going to the Middle East plus their incredible industriousness in building a new society over the last 10 years is inspiring. Oddly, to me, I felt at home there.

While a small number of participants (n = 5) developed greater sympathy for Israelis, this number was much lower than the 31 participants who developed greater sympathy for Palestinians. Furthermore, even when the tour generated more sympathy for Israelis, this was often still qualified in terms of greater solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, for example:

Yes, I shifted from seeing Israel only as the oppressor to having an appreciation and better understanding for where they are and have been coming from. Although visiting the settlements was difficult for me, it was important to have the experience of seeing, walking through and hearing from their representatives. I feel like I can now acknowledge the Israeli view and experience, in a way, nodding a YES to them, before going on to the AND of why I will be working even more for the human rights and nonviolent resistance work of the Palestinians.

Mirroring the 31 participants who articulated increased support for Palestinians (coupled with five articulating such support for Israelis), only one participant left with a more critical view of Palestinians compared to 19 who were more critical of Israelis after the trip. These numbers demonstrate that just as participants overwhelmingly developed support for Palestinians in greater numbers, they concurrently tended to develop greater criticism for Israel. While more participants articulated support for Palestinians than criticism of Israel, the ratio of increased support for Israelis vs Israelis was 6:1, while the ratio of newfound criticism of Israelis vs Palestinians was 19:1. Therefore, while people tend to leave the tours with changes in their support as opposed to criticism of either group, when they do develop criticism, it is almost unanimously directed against Israelis, not Palestinians. Examples of such responses to the question of how the tour changed their thinking that demonstrate this increased criticism of Israel include, “Absolutely. Less tolerance for Zionism,” and “Yes, I have seen with my own eyes the degradation of those Israeli Arabs who are Occupied by Israeli Jews. This must stop. Israelis must change their government.”

In sum, when participants did express a shift in their political allegiances, they tended to shift toward becoming more supportive of Palestinians and more critical of Israel. Overall however, as previously discussed, more respondents reported greater understanding and empathy for “both sides” as opposed to only one population. For the majority of respondents, “both sides” appeared to signal a relatively equal level of support for Israelis and Palestinians. As such, even though when participants shifted their allegiances they tended to support Palestinians over Israelis, the majority of participants did not leave the tour clearly identifying with Palestinians over Israelis. Instead, a higher number of participants left the tour in greater support of “both sides” of the conflict without indicating greater solidarity with one group over the other.

4.2 It’s complicated

This commitment to “both sides” mirrors the second most frequent type of response to the question of “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?” which was that the tour complicated participants’ understandings of the conflict. Around the same number of people who expressed a greater commitment to “both sides” in their responses, 39 compared to 41 (13 were coded as both), responded that the tour
changed their thinking about the conflict, in that it made it more complicated. For example, as one participant explained:

I’m much more aware of how very complicated the situation is. I’ve always been rather fair minded but now see both sides more clearly. The fear on both sides is enormous. The way the Palestinians must live with checkpoints and permits is abhorrent. The way the Jewish people in Sderot and other settlements near the border with Gaza live in constant fear of rockets and tunnels is also shameful.

As seen in the quote above, discussions of “both sides” were similar to participants’ discussions of complexity, in that they did not express greater support for Israelis nor Palestinians after the trip. Of the 39 people who said that the tour made the situation more complicated, only one reported a more positive view of Israelis, one a more negative view of Israelis, and one a more negative view of Palestinians. This suggests that reactions that focus on complexity do not correlate with greater support for either group. By realizing the conflict is more complex than they thought, participants appear hesitant to align themselves with one “side” of the conflict. As one participant explained in his answer to “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?”

Very much so. I’ve realized that the more I know, the less I understand. The conflict is very complex, and I’ve moved from saying I’m pro-one side to taking a position that I’m pro-justice and being able to empathize with each of the groups.

The quote above exemplifies the underlying framework of the two most common responses, those that were coded as demonstrating support for “both sides” and those that were coded as prompting greater complexity. While 36 participants shifted toward becoming more supportive of one “side” of the conflict (usually toward supporting Palestinians), 67 were coded as either “both sides” or “complexity.” Therefore, while on the one hand, these tours appear more likely to shift participants toward supporting Palestinians than Israelis, it appears even more likely that participants leave the tour with political positions that emphasize both Israelis and Palestinians’ suffering and that understand the conflict to be too complex for them to identify with one “side” over the other.

4.3 Shifts in political positions

In terms of specific viewpoints that arose from the tour, the two most common positions that participants developed were becoming more critical of the media’s portrayal of the conflict (n = 19) and becoming more supportive of a one-state solution (n = 13). For example, one respondent wrote, “I have developed a greater empathy for folks who advocate a variety of a one-state solution, especially from the position of human and civil rights for all citizens.” Similarly, another participant responded, “I was already pretty staunchly a ‘two-state’ solution proponent before visiting Israel, but now I am questioning that position.” None of the 181 responses to the question of, “have you begun to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians involved in the conflict?” referenced greater support for a two-state solution.

In terms of participants changing their views on the US media’s portrayal of the conflict, most participants who referenced this topic explained that they would now consume media on Israel/Palestine with a more critical eye. The majority of these respondents also stated that after going on the tour, they realized how the US media is biased against Palestinians. For example, as one participant explained, “I must say I was more pro-Israel before the trip. Now I see a balanced side and feel for the Palestinians. It is very different than what we hear on the news.” Similarly, another respondent remarked, “Americans have been brainwashed against Palestinians [...] We need better news coverage of the Palestinian view. Even when stories mention their point of view, the good points are minimized and the Israeli view is always right.” Realizing that the US media is biased against Palestinians and then committing themselves to critically filtering their consumption of media coverage of the region was a repeated theme in participants’ planned actions following the tour.

4.4 Action and engagement

By far, the most common response to the second question, “in what ways can people help promote peace between the Israelis and Palestinians” was education. In total, 83 respondents
wrote that they could promote peace through sharing their experiences, whether through formal educational platforms such as lectures or through informal methods, namely engaging in conversations with their peers. For example, one participant on a dual-narrative tour with his Church connected his commitment to education to the previously discussed media bias against Palestinians. As he explained:

The most important thing I believe I can do is educate and inform family and friends of the dual-narrative I learnt that is untainted by propaganda and media distortion. Education (visceral and informative) was the most powerful experience of this trip and relating this to others in the United States from a first-hand perspective - I believe - is a huge step I can take to promote co-resistance and co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Another participant echoed this sentiment in her response to the question of “in what ways can people help promote peace between the Israelis and Palestinians?” She answered:

Share our personal experiences of traveling to Israel/Palestine - as well as those of the people we met in Israel/Palestine- with family and friends back in the states. This will hopefully reflect a more balanced or nuanced understanding of the conflict and challenge the over-simplified image painted in the US media.

Even though the most frequent form of educational engagement articulated by participants was to engage in conversation and “spread the truth,” other participants delineated more concrete plans for future educational events in their communities. The following quote offers one example of such a response:

By sharing our experience and telling the story of our own insights and developing positions to everyone we can. By encouraging people to learn more and fund education and peace efforts. My husband and I hope to host Ibrahim[2] and others in our community in New York to raise greater consciousness about the challenges and needs. It is a highly educated community, a fairly wealthy community and a democratic area - the mix is perfect for supporting these efforts.

While the most common type of response to how people could help promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians involved education, supporting NGOs in Israel/Palestine (n = 32) was the second most frequently coded theme. For these respondents, it was important to donate to the organizations they saw on the trip, and to support them through raising awareness. As one participant explained:

Stay in touch with those individuals and organizations we met with during the trip and explore opportunities for continued engagement and ways to further support their own efforts to promote peace.

A similar number of participants (n = 26), advocated for direct political intervention, whether through lobbying or contacting their representatives in the US Government. Most of these responses referred either generally to contacting elected officials or more clearly indicated pressuring politicians to take a less “pro-Israel” stance on the conflict. As one participant answered to the question of “in what ways can people help promote peace between the Israelis and Palestinians?” “Advocating with congressional reps and President regarding how US supports Israel.” Another participant similarly explained:

As an American citizen, I believe I have the obligation to continue to educate my fellow citizens and to lobby my representatives to guide the U.S. government to a more productive role in the conflict. I can also work with NGOs like my church to speak for a truly just and peaceful future.

Another participant included more specific details in her ideas about influencing the US Government:

Maybe being more vocal with US elected officials that there is a difference between supporting Israel and condoning what is now going on and pushing for the US Govt. to take a position that aid to Israel going forward must be coupled with an insistence that withdrawal from the West Bank must be implemented (which I think can be done in a way that does not “threaten” Israel’s existence or safety).

For this particular respondent, pressure on the US Government should come in the form of continued support for Israel that is then tied to conditions that facilitate an end to the occupation of the West Bank. For her, the general premise of US ally-ship with Israel need not be challenged, as she differentiates between “supporting Israel” and “condoning what is now going on.” She also emphasizes the need to not “threaten Israel’s existence” in her response. Such a response aligns with centrist approaches to “solving the conflict” that champion diplomacy led by western powers.
and locate the root of the conflict within Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. This type of position is distinct from more radical, political approaches that employ a framework of decolonization and see western intervention, whether militarily or through diplomacy, as a form of imperialism and therefore a hindrance to the liberation of the Palestinian people.

5. Discussion

Contrary to most forms of political tourism in Israel/Palestine, in which participants are thought to simply reinforce preexisting beliefs and allegiances, dual-narrative tours appear to be shifting participants’ thinking about the conflict. The overwhelming majority of respondents experienced a definitive shift in their opinions about the conflict, while a minority of participants’ preexisting beliefs were reinforced. In total, 93 percent of respondents were coded as having some change in thinking, while only 7 percent of participants stated that the tour did not cause them to think differently about Israelis and Palestinians. These shifts most commonly took the form of generating increased empathy and support for “both sides” of the conflict, with 41 participants articulating such a response. However, for 31 participants, the tour caused a distinct shift toward becoming more supportive of Palestinians. Only five participants’ political allegiances shifted in the other direction of becoming more supportive of Israel. Therefore, although a greater number of participants moved from previously supporting Israelis to now being more supportive of Palestinians than the other way around, most participants framed their ideological transformation in terms of greater identification with “both sides.”

Parallel to this finding, participants also frequently cited the tour as complicating their understanding of the conflict. Both of these responses (supporting both sides and finding the conflict to be more complicated) did not significantly correlate with greater support for either Palestinians or Israelis. In sum, while more participants (n = 31) shifted toward greater support for Palestinians than Israelis, the dominant reaction to the tours appears to be the cultivation of a more “balanced” approach to the conflict. In terms of changes in specific political views, a considerable number of participants wrote that they are now more critical of US media coverage of the conflict and that they are more open to, or supportive of, a one-state solution. In terms of post-trip political action, participants overwhelmingly felt that the best way to help promote peace was through education, though a significant number of participants also referenced supporting NGOs in Israel/Palestine and attempting to influence US foreign policy.

These findings demonstrate that participants perceive these tours as having changed their thinking and ideology, which challenges the findings of several earlier studies on tourism’s ability to engender positive perceptions of a previously stigmatized population (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991). Sociologists and psychologists alike have noted the pervasive tendency of people to avoid changes in ideology and to cling to habits of thought through processes such as cognitive dissonance (Veblen, 1899; McDougall, 1908; Festinger, 1957). In the case of dual-narrative tours, few respondents appeared to engage in cognitive dissonance. Instead of self-selecting information that aligned with their previous beliefs, participants openly described processes of attitudinal change.

While critics of solidarity/justice tourism argue that justice tourism self-selects people who are already decided on political issues, dual-narrative tours appear to be successful in reaching people who were not already sympathetic to Palestinian narratives (Belhassen et al., 2014; Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000; Richter, 1983). As such, these tours appear to prompt greater shifts in participants’ views compared to similar tours that may confirm or strengthen tourists’ perceptions about the conflict (e.g. Schneider, 2015). Nonetheless, rather than clearly move tourists from solidarity with one group to another, a large number of participants reported complexity and support for “both sides” as their major take-aways from the tour. Ultimately, this speaks to the power of “dual-narrative” tours to promote empathy and a nuanced understanding of Israel/Palestine.

At the same time though, characterizations of the conflict that emphasize complexity and moral equivalency between Israelis and Palestinians are often criticized for not adequately recognizing an explicit power dynamic that privileges Israeli political interests (Aouragh, 2016; Abu-Nimer, 2001; Gawerc, 2006; Hubbard, 2001; Maoz, 2000; Ross, 2017; Rothstein, 1999). Studies of
Palestinian-Israeli peacebuilding efforts have drawn attention to the dangers of drawing false equivalencies between Palestinian and Israeli positions, arguing that portraying the two groups as equal players in a “conflict” decontextualizes the situation from its settler-colonial foundations and ignores Israel’s political/military advantages over Palestinians[3]. Palestinian solidarity activists similarly argue that claims of complexity and exceptionalism protect the Israeli state from critique and hinder activism rooted in coalitional approaches to fighting oppression[4]. Likewise, the Israeli Government and supporting organizations have specifically instructed advocates to invoke the argument of complexity in the face of analogies that draw parallels between the occupation and apartheid as well as Zionism and colonialism. For example, as Aouragh (2016) describes of a 2009 instructional report by “The Israel Project”:

> The report documents the methods that lie behind the meticulously organized media hasbara and concerns Israel’s move to a positive (soft) discourse by demonstrating which language should be deployed to advance the pro-Israel paradigm. It gives an example of how to counteract the “right of return” (enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution 194) by re-framing it as an unreasonable Palestinian “demand” that is blocking peace efforts. This political recalibration is designed to reinforce the sense of the conflict being complicated. The report warns against declarative statements (every, totally, always and never) because “westerners think in shades of grey.”

With this in mind, dual-narrative tours may be at odds with the goals of some Palestinian solidarity activists, in that most participants described greater complexity and support for “both sides” as the primary ways that they thought differently about Israelis and Palestinians following the tour.

Scholars such as Aouragh (2016) demonstrate how a focus on complexity may stifle meaningful activism on behalf of human rights and justice in Israel/Palestine. However, the majority of participants who emphasized the ways that MEJDI complicated their views of the conflict remained enthusiastically committed to engaging with Israel/Palestine through education, supporting NGOs and advocating for more balanced US policies on the Middle East. A small number of participants linked their heightened sense of the complexity to an inability to imagine paths for social change, hinting that such confusion could lessen their motivation to become active in efforts for peace and justice. As one participant explained, “[the] situation is even more complex than I realized. Hard to imagine how peace will ever come.” This sentiment was echoed by another participant who wrote, “based on the last few weeks I can’t say that I am more hopeful. I am more aware of the many levels of complexity and the entrenchment that makes any movement toward a resolution possible.” Yet despite such exceptions, the majority of participants did not seem deterred by their states of complexity and confusion, and instead, enthusiastically spoke about educating others through both informal conversations and organized events to promote peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

Regardless of whether participants left the tour thinking that the situation was more complicated or whether they employed the rhetoric of “both sides,” the tours appeared to strengthen the majority of participants’ commitments to working toward peace in Israel/Palestine. Concurrent with their emphasis on “both sides” complexity, the two most common forms of engagement were education and supporting NGOs in Israel/Palestine. These actions align with the participants’ attitudinal shifts, as education encompasses the complexities of the conflict and supporting NGOs defers to local experts’ understandings. In addition, since the majority of organizations that the tour groups visit are joint Israeli-Palestinian organizations, supporting such NGOs also aligns with participants’ emphases on supporting “both sides.” The third major type of engagement was to try to directly impact US foreign policy through lobbying, petitions and other methods to pressure the US Government. The number of participants who advocated for this type of political action (26) were similar in number to the participants who became more supportive of Palestinians (31). Therefore, while more participants left the tour advocating for forms of engagement that prioritize nuance and empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians, a smaller but still sizable number of participants advocated for political actions that align more closely with traditional solidarity activism.

Future research should delve deeper into the themes brought to light in these surveys by ethnographically studying the language, interactions and framings used by guides and participants on these tours. In addition, longitudinal interviews with tour participants could be useful to determine whether participants’ initial reactions to the tour (as evidenced through the surveys) have lasting impacts on participants. Finally, a comparative study of dual-narrative tours
with traditional justice tours would offer valuable insight into the unique potential of tour groups like MEJDI to promote social change. Pre- and post-surveying of a variety of tour programs (dual-narrative, justice tourism, mainstream/state tourism) in Israel/Palestine would allow for a comparative analysis that could shed light on which strategies and pedagogical orientations are most effective in facilitating attitude change and/or promoting transnational activism.

6. Conclusion

Scholars have encountered mixed results when attempting to determine how tourism affects travelers’ attitudes about a host country (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Grothe, 1970; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991). Although the tourists surveyed in this study ranged in terms of how they were impacted by the dual-narrative tour, it appears that more participants experienced significant changes in their attitudes than not. These shifts overwhelmingly facilitated increased empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians, demonstrating the power of tourism, in this particular case, to foster positive attitude change toward the host country’s two largest populations. Therefore, while several studies of tourism and attitude change suggest that people who hold negative views toward a host population are unlikely to develop positive sentiments about them through tourism (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991), in the case of MEJDI tours to Israel/Palestine, such processes of increased understanding and respect do appear to occur. These changes in attitudes were most pronounced in terms of participants’ reduced prejudice toward Palestinians. With rising levels of Islamophobia and anti-Arab bigotry in the USA (Organ et al., 2014), dual-narrative tours appear to be one method to effectively counter such stereotypes through contact.

In addition, dual-narrative tours appear to break with most forms of justice tourism in which tourists’ beliefs are simply reinforced through a process of “selective exposure.” Through comparing MEJDI tourists’ motivations and demographic characteristics to those of mainstream and Palestine solidarity tourists, MEJDI tourists’ attitudinal changes can likely be attributed to the fact that dual-narrative tours appear to recruit tourists who would not normally be exposed to the perspectives presented on the tour. While scholars such as Richter (1984), Clarke (2000) and Brin (2006) contend that conflict tourism generally reinforces previous beliefs and serves as an outlet for political expression, dual-narrative tours appear to be an exception, in that they actually rework and complicate tourists’ political sympathies.

Kassis et al. (2016) claim that any visitor to Palestine will naturally develop a sense of solidarity with the Palestinian people. While exposure to Palestinian perspectives and humanizing experiences with Palestinians on MEJDI did not consistently lead participants to politically support them, the tours did appear to increase tourists’ sympathy toward Palestinians, which sometimes translated into reduced levels of prejudice toward Arabs and Muslims in general. Though at a lower rate, the tours also engendered empathy for Israelis, usually alongside empathy for Palestinians, i.e. “both sides.” In sum, while these tours certainly did not transform every participant into a Palestine solidarity activist, when the tours did shift participants’ allegiances toward either Israelis or Palestinians, they usually became more supportive of Palestinians. This suggests that simply witnessing the occupation and hearing from Palestinians directly, even when coupled with an equal emphasis on Israeli narratives, is more likely to move US tourists toward greater identification with the Palestinian cause rather than greater or continued support for Israel.

Nonetheless, more respondents framed their reactions to the trip in terms of greater support for “both sides” as opposed to articulating political frameworks that recognize power imbalances within the conflict. Instead of automatically expressing solidarity with Palestinians, as Kassis et al. (2016) suggest, the majority of participants emphasized the complexity of the situation and their support for “both sides.” Early scholarship on the contact hypothesis as well as recent studies on peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine focus on the role of reducing prejudice and identifying shared humanity in conflict resolution (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Dessel and Rogge, 2008). Major peacebuilding NGOs continue to employ this model for social change, structuring their work around fostering humanization and empathy (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Hubbard, 2001; Gawerc, 2006; Rothstein, 1999; Ross, 2017)[5]. At the same time, Palestinian activists and scholars who oppose “normalization” argue that equating Israeli and Palestinian perspectives...
decontextualizes the “conflict” by undermining Palestinians’ human rights as the indigenous population and by erasing Israel’s role as the occupier (see for instance, Amihai, 2013).

MEJDI participants’ primary reactions to dual-narrative tours appear to be a commitment to “both sides” and an emphasis on the complexity of the conflict. In this way, dual-narrative tours align with scholarship on the contact hypothesis and peacebuilding that advocates for cultural change through initiatives that prioritize dialogue and common ground. Yet at the same time, dual-narrative tours may also be planting the seeds for more radical, political transformations. By complicating some participants’ previous support for the Israeli state, reducing prejudice toward Palestinians, and by instilling a desire among participants for more balanced US policies and media that recognize the occupation, these tours may also prompt participants to engage in overt political activism. In this way, the tours may be facilitating social action that recognizes power imbalances and therefore contributes to the realization of Palestinians’ human rights and freedom.

Both activists and scholars are divided as to whether peacebuilding initiatives should primarily serve to empower marginalized populations, such as the Palestinians, or whether they should prioritize concepts such as shared humanity and dialogue. Though fully discussing the merits of these two perspectives is beyond the scope of this paper, what the findings of this study reveal, is that a single program can contribute to both objectives at once. Communicating Israeli and Palestinian perspectives side-by-side may inspire tourists to join movements that advocate for Palestinians’ liberation, just as it may also facilitate engagement with Israel/Palestine that is rooted in universalist language and thinking. Dual-narrative tours appear to be most successful in cultivating mindsets that equate Israelis and Palestinians’ responsibility for the “conflict” and promote conflict transformation rooted in tolerance, dialogue and cooperation. Yet at the same time, dual-narrative tours can simultaneously spark a recognition of structural inequalities among its participants, which often inspires overtly political action. These two outcomes complicate the divide between those who advocate for and against the use of dialogue and tourism as peacebuilding tools. In addition, these findings speak to the power of tourism to reduce prejudice, transform political views and inspire commitments to peace and justice activism. Although MEJDI tours may set different tourists on distinct paths for engagement, for nearly all of its participants, MEJDI broadens tourists’ perspectives and expands their understandings of Israel/Palestine.

Notes

1. It is important to note that Palestinian and Israeli identities, narratives, and interests are complex and intersectional (for example see Shohat (1988)’s “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the standpoint of its Jewish victims”) and that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict cannot easily be reduced to “two sides.” Nonetheless, so-called “dual-narrative” tours provide an analytically useful case to understand the role of tourism in attitude formation and activism, because they expose participants to two purportedly oppositional narratives on the same itinerary.

2. pseudonym.

3. See also the BDS Movement on the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi


5. See for example, organizations such as Encounter www.encounterprograms.org/about-us/, Seeds of Peace (www.seedsofpeace.org/about/), and the Parents Circle http://theparentscircle.org/en/pccf/home-page-en/

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Further reading


About the author

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Abstract

Purpose – What ought we morally to do in a tourism academia dominated by metrics, quantification and digital codification? The purpose of this paper is to address this question by presenting the idea of “hyper academia” and exploring ethical perspectives and values related to hyper-digital cultures.

Design/methodology/approach – Drawing inspiration from classical and post-disciplinary traditions, the topic is exposed in a creative and multi-layered way using conceptual, philosophical and artistic tools. It is structured in four sections: An introductory essay on gratitude, a philosophical thought experiment, a literary short story and a manifesto.

Findings – Gratitude referencing is a method of personalizing the attribution of influence in scholarship and restoring the importance of depth and slowness over speed, novelty and quantity. The thought experiment allows us to see how we make value judgements on academic work under different scenarios. The dystopian short story shows the radical power that such a genre has to create emotional engagement whilst activating our critical reflexivity. Finally, the manifesto answers the question of what we morally “ought to do” by inviting scholars to engage with five duties.

Originality/value – This paper looks beyond previous descriptive studies of academic rankings and metrics, inviting tourism scholars to reflect on the values and moral justifications behind our evaluation cultures.

Keywords Academic cultures, Digitalization, Metrics, Epistemology, Ethics, Post-disciplinarity

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

It is early in the morning and I have just opened an e-mail on my smart phone. Still sleepy, I read the subject lines of one e-mail after another sent by academic platforms such as Academia.edu, Researchgate, Mendeley, informing me about my performance: “Somebody found your article on Google”; “People are recommending your work”; “Your publication has a new achievement; see achievement”; “Congratulations Ana, you reached a milestone!” I open the last e-mail and beside the congratulatory message I see a shiny digital medal which seems stolen from a children’s cartoon. “I am now awarded a cute green medal. Thank you!” I smile sarcastically and imagine the web designers who were responsible for the communicative style of these digital networks. If I was to put a name to this experience, I would call it the “childification of my academic identity.” There is something (tragi?-)comical in being a middle aged tourism scholar in her pijamas being awarded and commanded to – “see this!” and “do that!” But I should not be surprised. This is what in a previous study on social media I described as “Authoritarian Virtual Coaching”:

The voice addresses the user with a colloquial style, which tries to imitate that of friends or colleagues and is far from other types of more formal communication. However, it combines this “friendly” style with authoritative tendencies (such as the language of the coach of a sport team). Within the sites it is common to find plenty of commands: “Send a message to […]”, “Write on her wall […]”, “Suggest friends for […]” “Write a review […]”, “See what people are saying about […]”. The authoritarian language that appears in the main pages of the sites is always encouraging participation and speed of action; it does not encourage protection of privacy or reflexivity. […] The “coach” seems to say: “Well, let’s pretend that we already know each other and let’s get started.” (Munar, 2010, p. 145)

Real-time digitized performance systems of information rely on the cultures of exhibitionism, voyerism, sociability and reward, known from social networks in general (Munar, 2010). These popular platforms represent a new actor in the play of metrics and quantification of scholarship,
which has long occupied the attention of researchers in tourism studies and other fields. Some examples of this interest include the mapping of the most cited scholars (McKercher, 2008), the evolution and rankings of academic journals and research production (Benckendorff and Zehrer, 2013; Park et al., 2011), rankings of educational programs (Severt et al., 2009) and the impact of metrics in our academic cultures (Dredge et al., 2014; Munar, 2016). Additionally, scholars from the Critical Tourism Studies and Tourism Education Futures Initiative networks have, for years, denounced exclusionary practices in knowledge production (Chambers and Buzinde, 2015; Munar et al., 2017) as well as the challenges of neoliberalism and managerialism in higher education, while proposing a series of alternative frameworks for research and education (Ayikoru et al., 2009; Ayikoru, 2014; Belhassen and Caton, 2011; Pritchard et al., 2011; Dredge et al., 2015; Young et al., 2017).

Parallel to this, and as a major cause of the increase in scholarly work on the topic of metrification, academic institutions and universities around the globe have seen their funding and legitimacy becoming increasingly dependent on performance metrics and evaluation systems (Deem et al., 2007; Burrows, 2012; Collini, 2012; Giroux, 2014). Digital technologies are at the core of this evolution, allowing for centralization, comparison and analysis, thanks to the massive collection, classification, standardization, storage and retrieval of academic data and content. Metrics have come to dominate promotions, recruitment, and talent development strategies, becoming a central concern for anyone wishing to pursue an academic career. They are ubiquitous and pervasive across scholarly institutions and networks, influencing our daily academic lives and relationships, shaping the ethics and morality of academic behavior, providing dogmas and canons, and influencing the processes of inclusion and exclusion of knowledge production and education. Exploring ways to make sense of this evolution and strategies to regain empowerment, ethical responsibility and “adulthood” in a hyper-connected and hyper-digitized academic world is an urgent matter this paper aims to address.

“Hyper Academia” began as a keynote speech I was invited to give at the “26th Nordic Symposium of Tourism and Hospitality Research” in Falun, Sweden. The inspiration for this work came from reading the introduction to the call for papers: “Everything is just a click away. The interactivity and connectedness related to the instant and social use of information technology create communities and social inclusion that both transcend borders and go beyond physical interaction and travel. At the same time, they produce new forms of inequality, disconnectedness and exclusion” (26th Nordic Symposium of Tourism and Hospitality Research, 2017); the lecture became an opportunity to focus on a series of epistemic and ethical questions such as what considerations of falseness and truth, right and wrong were hyper-digital cultures fostering in academia? How can we imagine and become scholars in such cultures?

A multi-layered exposition

It is important to mention that this paper does not follow a traditional academic structure or guidelines for academic writing. For example, it does not include the customary “summing up” conclusion. The following text addresses the topic of hyper academia in a creative and multi-layered way using conceptual, philosophical and artistic tools. The genre that we use to create and communicating knowledge is not neutral; it has implications for how we comprehend and express knowledge, our abilities to think differently, more broadly or better. As research on creative processes has proven (Bilton, 2007) intellectual expressions do not follow the binary of "we think" and after “we create,” but instead resemble a fluid process where "creating is thinking." The combination of conceptual, philosophical, artistic and literary styles (such as short-stories, poetry, drama/theater plays) for advancing ethical and moral understandings has a long tradition. Some renowned examples include classical thinkers such as Seneca or Lucretius, philosophers of the Enlightenment as Voltaire, modern authors such as Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Octavio Paz or recently others such as Alain de Botton. The need for freedom and experimentation in scholarly genres has also been encouraged and practiced by tourism scholars advocating post-disciplinary approaches to knowledge production (see contributions to the special issue; Munar et al., 2016). The following reflection uses inspiration from both the classical and post-disciplinary traditions. It includes sound and visual elements as well as textual ones, and it is structured in four sections: an introductory essay on gratitude, a philosophical thought experiment, a literary short story and a manifesto as a form of conclusion.
Gratitude referencing

You may recognize the experience of finding deep learning where you least expect it. My idea of gratitude referencing is one of these experiences. In the summer of 2017, I downloaded *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (2012) (C. AD 121–AD 65), the famous Roman emperor and philosopher follower of the classical philosophical school of stoicism. I was walking my usual route to work with a coffee-to-go in one hand and my mobile phone in the other, listening to the audiobook with my head phones. The issue with an audiobook compared to reading a digital or a physical book is that it is difficult to make a quick check and see when a specific type of content or paragraph ends. Under these digitally restrained conditions, I found myself bound to listen to what at the time I was experiencing as Marcus Aurelius’ never-ending praise-litany while thinking – “When does he begin with the real stuff? Did I buy the wrong book?” and feeling a strong sense of impatience arising in me. Marcus Aurelius begins his famous meditations with a long and detailed acknowledgment where he mentions his teachers one after another; the persons and members of his family who have taught him something; and others that were examples of virtue or inspiration. He uses several pages to let us know the multiple ways in which he is indebted to them before he moves on to share any of his personal insights with us.

Sometimes we can be blind to beauty and at other times we can simply be deaf to it because while Marcus Aurelius’ meditations have indeed many interesting insights, the most moving and human aspect of his work is precisely the beginning. There he was, the most powerful man, the emperor of the largest empire of his time, showing detailed humble gratitude to those who inspired and taught him something, and not as an addition to his work, an endnote or a footnote, but as a “face-note,” at the front, the first thing to be seen before seeing him. This resonated with me as a different and beautiful way of paying tribute when compared to our automatized referencing systems and citation cultures. Do not get me wrong; I am the first one to hate spending time on the tedious task of editing texts into the right citation and referencing styles. From Refworks to Mendeley, it has become so easy to search, store, retrieve and insert mentions of others’ work. Our readings and influences appear incorporated as dozens of surnames here and there between parentheses and commas, many of which we will immediately forget once the paper is published, if not before; such a perfect example of hyper academia – smart, effective, productivity enhancing, fast, global and standardized.

Marcus Aurelius had a different relationship to those that inspired him. He appears to follow the invitation of Lucius Annaeus Seneca (C. BC 5–AD 65), a Roman philosopher and a key figure of stoicism, who wrote a letter to a friend, Paulus Pompeio, which is now preserved for posterity as an essay with the title “On the Shortness of Life” (2004). Despite the impersonal title, I love to think of this text for what it was, a letter to a dear friend about what matters. Consciously or unconsciously, we always have an audience when we write, sometimes our peers, sometimes an abstract global academy or a faceless anonymous bad-tempered peer-reviewer. How different it would be if what we wrote was to be read by the one we cared for most, the one we admired or loved. What would happen if we began our papers with “Dear beloved”? Would we be willing to waste the time of our loved ones on something that was not worth reading or did not search for truth or beauty or goodness? And what happens when we read Seneca’s words that were meant to be read by Paulus. Are not we also sharing, as benefactors, part of the love that existed in that first communication?

Seneca (2004) concludes his letter-essay about the finitude of human life in a hopeful note by letting us know that despite our limitations, we are given the power and the art to connect to many, to be part of the many and add the wisdom and beauty of many to our own:

> By the toil of others we are led into the presence of things which have been brought from darkness into light. We are excluded from no age, but we have access to them all […] There are households of the most noble intellects: choose the one into which you wish to be adopted, and you will inherit not only their name but their property too: Nor will this property need to be guarded meanly or grudgingly: the more it is shared out, the greater it will become. (pp. 23-25)

How lucky we are, we humans, to tap into these worlds of beautiful treasures. Here we can encounter friends that will trust us in despair and enlighten us in our angst. How easy it is for us to become part of a long lineage. We were given a family and an upbringing, and not a lot was in
our power, but the product of chance (or for those of you that have faith, of providence), but Seneca has good news; we are, as part of the human species, given this special gift of transcendence by connecting to and learning from others. However, our contemporary digital times of speed searching, scrolling and our obsession with whatever is latest or newest fuel specific transformations and adaptations between humans and technologies (Hayles, 2012). The expansion of hypertext and web reading in general tends to degrade comprehension and, as mentioned by Catheryn Hayles (2012) in her excellent book on digital media and technogenesis:

[A] shift in cognitive modes is taking place, from the deep attention characteristic of human enquiry to the hyper attention characteristic of someone scanning webpages […] As contemporary environments become more information-intensive, it is not a surprise that hyper attention (and its associated reading strategy, hyper reading) is growing and that deep attention (and its corresponding reading strategy, close reading) is diminishing. (p. 69)

And while academics often mix hyper and deep reading strategies, we may consider in which ways managerialism with its productivity focus and prioritization of speed jeopardizes reflexive in-depth reading and interpretation thereby diminishing our collective capacity to cope with complex phenomena. Stoic philosophy reminds us of the power of deeply engaging with the work of great thinkers, not as a way of becoming subservient to the ideas presented in these works or deferent to the authority of the powerful, but as a way to activate our capacities to think and our critical autonomy:

Don’t just say that you have read them; show that through them you have learned to think better, to be a more discriminating and reflective person. Books are like training weights for the mind. They are very helpful but it will be a bad mistake to suppose that one has made progress simply by having internalized their contents. (on the role of reading in Stoic education, Nussbaum, 1994, p. 346)

Marcos Aurelius’ exercise in gratitude shows us a way to do this. Gratitude referencing is a method of personalizing the attribution of influence in scholarship; an approach that can help us to slow down, pay attention, recognize the value of engaging deeply and broadly with the work of others and restore the importance of depth or patience over speed, novelty or quantity. With gratitude referencing, we offer recognition to those who have helped us exercise the muscles of our rationality, and to take charge of our human freedom to address important questions in society and in life. Therefore, in this paper, I have adopted gratitude referencing as a way of paying tribute to all of those who have inspired the ideas presented in this text.

The thought experiment: recruiting a hyper academic

Gratitude referencing I

I realized the power of thought experiments from the philosopher John Rawls (1971/1999) whose experiment “the veil of ignorance” aims at exploring the morality of a specific society or situation by asking participants to imagine themselves without personal identity considerations. Imagine that you were not born yet. Now imagine that you do not know if you will be born in a rich or poor family, with this or that gender, or race, or sexuality, or religion, etc. And now, from this original position and not knowing the specific identity mix that would be given to you, ask yourself in which kind of society would you prefer to be born? As an explorer who discovers a new view of the world, the idea of a pre-identity position makes us consider issues of privilege, inclusion and exclusion and invites us to explore alternative perspectives to those presented by our current situation. I am also deeply indebted to Kellee Caton (2012, 2016) for her work on dialog epistemology, morality and a humanistic paradigm, and to the insights on value free, value laden and value judgement in science of Elisabeth Anderson (2004, 2015) and Kristen Intemann’s (2010) feminist epistemologies. The content of the following thought experiment is a creative exercise that was born out of the main ideas and philosophical discussions of these thinkers. It presents an application of their multifold critique of objectivism to challenge understandings of meritocracy in hyper academic cultures.

Before proceeding with the thought experiment, I ask you (the reader) to select one of the three letters, A, B or C, and write the selected letter here: [...]
Think experiment

Imagine that you are a junior academic who has recently been accepted into a PhD program. You are looking forward to starting an academic career. This is what you have always wanted. You feel a little nervous because this morning you are going to attend the first meeting at your new university. But you are also excited and happy, and most of all looking forward to conversing with the senior academic who has been assigned as your supervisor.

Your supervisor welcomes you and explains that she has some good news to share with you: the university has decided to allocate funding for a future tenured position in the area of research of your PhD. This position will be available in a few years’ time. Of course, the tenure position will be advertised and open to competition, but you will have a reasonable opportunity to get this job.

The supervisor explains in detail the conditions of this process: your future recruitment committee will consist of three academics and they will have access to all the documentation related to your scholarly production and academic activities. Everything will be digitized and available online. This includes extensive metrics such as numbers of publications, journal rankings, citations, H-index, number of readers and downloads, evaluations, etc.

The supervisor informs you that there is an element of uncertainty and that a key aspect of the future recruitment process has not been decided yet. There are three possible scenarios for the evaluation of the applicants’ academic performance: the virus scenario, the fake-data and immoral agents scenario and the meritocratic scenario.

The virus scenario. In this situation, a virus has infected all university computers and information systems. It has deleted the journal names, the names of the academic institutions, replaced the names of co-authors with initials and all other quantitative metrics have vanished. However, there is no need to despair. The members of the committee will still have access to the core of your scholarship, your writing, examples of the course curriculum, descriptions of the activities and the initiatives mentioned in your CV.

Please take a moment to think how an academic evaluation of excellence and merit would play out in the virus scenario.

The fake-data and immoral agents scenario. In this scenario, the committee members have access to all documents, quantitative data, names and metrics, but these members are highly skeptical. They are aware that immoral agents have infiltrated the metric/ranking system. In this system, some researchers can get authorship without writing; others will gain easier access to highly ranked journals because of their personal contacts with editors or by providing gift authorship to influential scholars. Others benefit from working in institutions which excel at playing the “metrics game.” They are also aware of the existence of implicit biases and that comparison among institutions may be deceiving; productivity may differ a lot depending on job conditions, nationality/native language/gender of the applicants, quantity of teaching or engagement in academic citizenship, and so on.

Please take a moment to think how an academic evaluation of excellence and merit would play out in the fake-data and immoral agents scenario.

The meritocratic scenario. In this scenario, the committee members have access to all data. These academics believe that all of the metrics and ranking systems available are neutral and objective. They also believe that academic institutions are essentially unbiased, and that appointments, rewards and recognitions are based upon objective judgements of excellence. They see the metrics of impact, productivity and evaluation as a literal and truthful representation of the quality of your work and of your talent and potential.

Please take a moment to think how an academic evaluation of excellence and merit would play out in the meritocratic scenario.

Now the supervisor turns to you and asks, “Which of these scenarios do you perceive as more just for evaluating your work? Which of these scenarios will motivate you more to strive for academic excellence?”
There is a chance that at this point, you may feel distressed, not knowing the right choice to make. But, happily, the supervisor announces that there is help at hand in the form of a crystal ball placed in the middle of the room. She invites you to look at the crystal ball and see the scenario that corresponds with the letter you chose.

Take a look at the letter (A, B or C) that you selected earlier. Each one of these letters corresponds to a specific scenario assigned: C, the virus scenario; B, the fake-data and immoral agents scenario; and A, the meritocratic scenario. Take a moment to reflect on the scenario that corresponds with your selected letter. How do you feel about your fate? If you could change your letter with someone else, would you do that? What would the consequences of this change be in your way of becoming an academic?

A reflection

This experiment helps us to reflect on the values that come to the foreground and those that recede when we play with these different scenarios. It raises awareness about the personal and collective beliefs we take for granted and highlights the difference between relying on objectivism and meritocracy or on the culturally/socially constructed meaning of value. It encourages us to see how we will proceed to evaluate and make value judgements on the work of others given different circumstances, but also to realize that technology is not a neutral tool. Instead, judgement and sense making are created in the interplay between human beliefs and moral considerations, and technologically tailored processes. The potential consequences the random choice of a letter can have remind us of the aspects in our lives which, like fate or privilege (e.g. our social background, race, gender, nationality, language), are beyond our control yet still affect our career prospects.

Hyper academia

Gratitude referencing II

The following short story is inspired by the tradition of dystopian story telling. This genre, which Margaret Atwood has named speculative fiction, has the ability to show us possible futures. I learned from Atwood’s courageous literature the radical power this genre has to create emotional engagement whilst activating our critical reflexivity. Jean-Paul Sartre introduced complex philosophical problems and deliberations using literary and dramatic fiction, but most importantly, he allowed me to see how his use of artistic genres (e.g. The Wall) could illuminate even more of the deep paradoxes of the human condition than traditional philosophical essays (Sartre, published in Kaufmann, 1956, pp. 223-311). The audiovisual aspects of the story were inspired by the art of Laurie Anderson and her ability to juxtapose multiple media, and equally by her defense of creative freedom and digital experimentation. The philosophy and critical scholarship of Jürgen Habermas (1987, 1989) has been a core inspiration during my whole academic career, and the following story and manifesto would have not been possible without his insights on the colonization of lifeworlds, the alienation produced by bureaucratic and market systems alike and his defense of the power of rationality, communication and dialogue. I am also indebted to the psychiatrist and holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl (1959) for his argument of the counter position between the will to power and the will to meaning, and his reflection on the existential vacuum. And, finally, the following is inspired in Hanna Arendt’s (1958) scholarship for reminding us that the human condition always entails a public dimension – the capacity to use a public voice. From her insightful critique of totalitarianism, I used the idea of “the rule of nobody” and how automatized systems (being these bureaucratic and/or technological in nature) reward compliance. Hannah Arendt’s life and stubborn determination indicate that nothing compares to the freedom of an independent mind that decides to think.

A short story: the hyper Hero[1]

The light is softer now. It cannot take much longer.

He would do well as a doctor; someone able to deliver lethal news without changing his tone; the right convincing look; a sense of authority; and the excellent institutional representative. The voice of the Metric Executive Officer bounced off the large windows. There was something seducing
about his voice, something reminiscent of a mantra. After a while, his words fell into the background, inserted into our spines so we could walk out of the meeting straightened up, recently ironed, shiny. When did words start to resemble a digital bit and lose their texture? Long clean rows of ones and zeros, absolutes entangled with each other. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQDWgFi8QwvDrhqu7AR29diEdRAMQeG/view

Get yourself together! … She should not be so absent minded. She felt the wave of blame nearly as a relief. This was an important meeting of the newly established Hyper Academic Council. It was an honor to be among the top 2 percent of the excellent framework ranking.

How long had she been lost in her thoughts, she wondered? Thankfully, everything was being recorded and transcribed automatically by the obedient Alexa. There would be plenty of time afterwards if she ever wanted to listen more carefully to what Jack was saying. “All of our meetings – one click away.” This was not like when we avoided being the one who took the minutes – this was the age where we could have it all.

She pressed one hand against the other, under the table, harder. He was repeating something now, going once again through the key specifications of METRIT, the big data system that was to unite merit and metric.

We need to move to the voting then. The official agreement for all recruitment, promotion and systems under METRIT. I have no doubt that this is going to be a major improvement to our talent management. Take a look – with the new centralized system the Heads of Department and any manager at our institution will have real time access to all metrics on individual and collective performance.

He was pointing joyfully to the image on the big screen at the end of the room. A happy child with the latest toy (Figure 1).

This goes from the macro level of a department or research center, to the micro individual level. Here are all the details of our metric panopticon: How much it takes to submit a paper, all the metrics
related to where it is submitted over time, its impacts, the time people spend on their computers, the programs they use, the network analysis of their contacts not only for the scholars and practitioners they may relate to, but also for their readings and references and who reads them, quotes them, recommends them, the frequency and intensity of those links, their web usage, their teaching evaluations, their email usage, their expenditures and project activity. We have now included a total of 186 metrics divided into seven color blocks: Research production, research impact, academic service, projects and funding, teaching, academic management, and other activities.

“Look!” He pointed again at the screen, “It is a rainbow. The intensity of the color changes the more alive the category is. We are aiming at colorful people and liveliness. This is what we have been waiting for; the end of nepotism and bias, an open source system that finally achieves total objectivity and transparency in the decision making of talent progression in academia. Clearly there is a before and an after the Google METRIT.”

He looked beautiful and bright, as he stood there, his lean body in front of the screen.

In which color would my e-mails of love and failure, the ones of bitterness and jealousy, and the ones of triumph and euphoria appear? How will the liveness account for the tears of reading Madness, Rack and Honey, the memory of the hand on the page, or the deep friendship developed in one single conversation? Those special emotional bits are like hard liquor and burn inside me like a candle. Surely they deserve a heavy weighting in the algorithm; a deeper coloring of the links between the network nodes.

I was mistaken; it was not words that had been transformed into ones and zeros – a bit after a bit and before a bit. It was our own biological tissue. I recalled my first sentiment index of positive and negative terms developed for tourism destinations – my beautiful semantic web. It was now many years ago.

He caught my eyes and smiled.

The system is self-learning. It improves and learns as all our employees will continue feeding it with information. They log into work every day through the METRIT tension and the rest happens automatically.

Please, press the finger on this box to calculate your METRIT tension (Figure 2). https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BwJFe7VZGuxqTP2LM2/VhZqOtljqi/view?usp=sharing

And who is “the system” I wonder? It is difficult to imagine beyond the stereotype of a group of software geeks dressed as rap singers on a Monday. The problem was one of imagination. I had always thought that vampires would come dressed in black silk filled with lust and desire. Evil is faceless.
How could I have forgotten this? Or did I think that this kind of lethal banality was only to be found in the
darkest periods of European history?

I was among the chosen ones of the new competitive position “Hyper Academic”; a member of
the Metric Academic Council. Pride did not come in waves, but as an armor. My numbers were
way beyond average. I was one of the first to mine into the field of digitalization; a reference in the
field; I had been lucky. And now, I was also officially a powerful shiny rainbow.

Please, press the finger on this box to calculate your METRIT tension.

If someone held her gaze for more than a second, they may see the void.

Please, press the finger on this box to calculate your existential vacuum (Figure 3). https://drive.
googleg.com/file/d/1yx5TD9nWBKDK3lkU7b68kV/1MJaJ0-DsA/view

The existential vacuum is a widespread phenomenon of the twentieth century. This is understandable;
it may be due to a twofold loss which man has had to undergo since he became a truly human being.
At the beginning of human history, man lost some of the basic animal instincts in which an animal’s
behaviour is imbedded and by which it is secured. Such security, like Paradise, is closed to man
forever; man has to make choices. In addition to this, however, man has suffered another loss in his
more recent development inasmuch as the traditions which buttressed his behaviour are now rapidly
diminishing. No instinct tells him what he has to do, and no tradition tells him what he ought to do;
sometimes he does not even know what he wishes to do. Instead, he either wishes to do what other
people do (conformism) or he does what other people wish him to do (totalitarianism). (Frankl, 1959).

Victor Frankl’s voice sounded round and old, a distillation of the lessons learned from years of survival
in the concentration camps. But I had forgotten that it was not his voice I was listening to. It was the
digitalized voice of the unknown reader of an audiobook I had downloaded on my mobile device.

By comparison, Jack’s voice sounded impatient—“If no one is against this decision, the METRIT
model will now be adopted.”

What would I have for dinner? Most of all I needed a drink. One to celebrate that I was now
officially hypermetric, a hyper hero … and bored.

The human academy: a manifesto

The quantification of our intellectual work acts as the monetarization of intellectual production and
relationships in academia. Massive digitized metric systems function as dynamic stock exchanges
where the worth of human scholarship is translated into digital bits, which have more or less value in a codified system of rankings and statistical data sets. The price tag is now the amount of Google citations, the impact factors or star systems, the H-index. Habermas teaches us how highly complex societies regulate human relationships through steering systems, that is, using financial monetized systems or bureaucratic ones as mediums of interconnectivity, and also how an increase in steering systems results in a decrease in personal autonomy and rational deliberation. We may imagine our possibilities of freedom, self-expression and reflexivity as fire. There is no fire without air. Air is our capacity to engage in rational deliberation, and our compromise, as advocated by the classical Stoics, to think and act responsibly. Every time academic institutions or individuals decide to obey systemic steering processes, we block this air, but also we engage in a de-humanization process where our relationships with ourselves, others and scholarly work become automatized and commodified. It is not possible to enact this freedom of thought without also considering our political capacities or what David Held (1987) defines as the principle of human autonomy: “the capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social or physical. It is about the resources that underpin this capacity and about the forces that shape and influence its exercise” (pp. 275-277).

Hannah Arendt (1963/2006), in her book Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil, gives us formidable insight into the nature of evil (i.e. of acting immorally). The Western cultural tradition has conventionally imagined the evil as something highly individual, subjective and cunningly wise (something similar to the archetype of the bright devil). Arendt’s deep teaching is that contrary to this belief, evil often does not demand complex reflexive thinking. On the contrary, evil appears as the abdication of the intellect, as the abandonment of critical rationality and the blind following of orders or of regulations: “The essence of totalitarian government, and perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy, is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery out of men, and thus to dehumanize them” (Arendt, 1963/2006).

The philosophy of Derek Parfit (2011) highlights an intrinsic and fundamental relationship between caring if our acts are right or wrong and the reasons we have for being careful not to act in the “wrong” way: “whether some act is wrong depends on what, in certain actual or imagined situations, we or others would have most reason or sufficient reason to consent to, or agree to, or to want, or choose, or do” (p. 149). However, what Arendt’s thesis shows is that we can freely abandon our human condition and there are societies and political systems that instigate that abandonment. Instead of “thinking better” and being a “more discriminating and reflective person”; we find solace in following orders or the blind belief in steering systems (money, rules, military orders, metrics and rankings, etc.).

In a similar way, Sartre maintained that we are afraid of freedom and our own humanity and therefore engage in self-deception. The existentialist philosophers have provided us with two major insights. One is that the modern individual no longer has any more a “God or higher authority” that can tell us what is right and what is wrong to do, and the second is that scientific advancement and science in itself is not the same as what is good or what is morally right (e.g. atomic weapons or what we can do genetically today). Modern individuals are therefore “condemned” to doubt (or for some philosophers like Kierkegaard to a permanent state of angst). Still, because we miss this “God” so badly, we create panopticon hyper-systems that can act as Gods who free us from doubt or responsibility in our decision making.

According to Sartre, the modern individual appears condemned to be free, but also appears condemned to hide freedom from themselves through self-deception (bad faith). Individuals try to deceive themselves into believing that there are acts they have to do or ways they need to be. There are two modes of being – in itself (en soi) (this is the mode of being of things. Things exists all at once; e.g. a stone) and for itself (pour soi) (this is the human mode of being. Individuals want and wish also to be “all at once” – a fixed identity like the stone – but instead they are not, their identity is always becoming). According to Hannah Arendt, abandoning our human nature is what nurtures the unethical. It takes the form of blind subordination to rules and authority. In Sartre’s work, this process is subtler. It takes the form of the acceptance and embodiment of socially constructed roles (e.g. by uncritically playing the role of “the proper academic”). In Arendt’s case, the challenge to humanity comes from compliance and the will to power and in Sartre’s from the fear to doubt and to choose.
Habermas, Arendt, Sartre and Seneca all point in the same direction – that our moral being stands or falls with our commitment to fully embrace our human condition, i.e. our critical reflexivity and rationality. Morality cannot be comprehended without understanding that our capacity to think is deeply linked to our capacity to act rightly or wrongly.

What could be then a road map for our contemporary academic world, so that instead of having the logic of quantification and metrics, it had at its core the art of being human? What would it entail to imagine the humanization of academic cultures and environments as a way of increasing our moral responsibility? Looking back at this philosophical/artistic exploration what appears as today’s most urgent task is not a bill of rights, but a bill of duties.

A duty manifesto for a human academy

1. The duty to doubt: we claim our doubt, rejoice in our human capacity to doubt and demand the time and respect to engage with our doubt. We state that doubting is not the same as being cynical or sarcastic or hopeless. It is reclaiming our duty to question the truth, goodness or beauty of steering systems and deterministic technological processes; to connect with reality and to care for others and the world through inquiry.

2. The duty to engage in public dialogue: we are aware of our own limitations, biases and the partiality of our views and value judgement. We commit to creating spaces of dialogue, to fighting for the inclusion of different social groups (also marginalized groups) among those that “do” research, to allowing dissent as a motivation to present stronger and clearer justifications for our positions or interpretations.

3. The duty to think and search for meaning: we work to create a university that resembles a fitness center for thinking, where we, our students and our colleagues can strengthen our thinking muscles so we can exercise rationality autonomously and in different contexts and conditions. We advocate the search for meaning vs the search for power or control. We embrace the need for deep reading and engagement with the academic work of others; treating this work not as a commodity, but as something precious, worthy and in its own right.

4. The duty to reclaim responsibility for our actions and our political being: we expose that blind beliefs and reliance on hyper metrics result in the abandonment of our personal responsibility and moral judgement. We reclaim the need to exercise our political autonomy and engagement as the way to transform our institutions and our societies.

5. The duty to be grateful and rejoice: we are deeply grateful for the honor of being academics and the privilege of being “led by the work of others into the presence of the most beautiful treasures” (Seneca). We celebrate the joy and hope that is intrinsic to our creative work. We are deeply thankful for the possibilities of emancipation and transformation which are at the core of research enquiry and teaching.

Note

1. This story includes audiovisual elements; please see and/or listen to the attached audiovisual files by clicking on the link.

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Intention to travel internationally and domestically in unstable world

Svetlana Stepchenkova, Lijuan Su and Elena Shichkova

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine whether events such as acts of terrorism, political and social turmoil, military conflicts, epidemics, and similar influence preferences of Russian tourists for international and domestic travel (DT) and the role of psychographic and demographic factors in this process.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is a survey of 139 international tourists from a large Russian city. Variables representing the influence of instability in the world on selecting international vacations (unstable world, UW) and the willingness to turn to DT instead (domestic tourism, DT) were operationalized. The study operationalized the constructs of national attachment and consumer ethnocentrism and then converted them into manifest variables, NAT and CET. Hierarchical linear regression and logistic regression were conducted to investigate the relationship between UW and DT variables and personal factors. Supporting ANOVA and \( \chi^2 \) tests were conducted to further explore those relationships.

Findings – The study found that being a female, older and more attached to the homeland make Russian tourists more receptive to threats and risks of international travel; however, being wealthier, makes them less susceptible to those threats. Those with higher ethnocentric tendencies are more likely to turn to DT instead, while those with higher income are less likely.

Originality/value – The study does not pertain to a particular “destination-negative event” context. Nor the study is interested in a particular travel risk or whether or not Russian tourists perceive international travel as risky. The study focuses on to what degree those perceptions influence their decisions to travel internationally or domestically. Psychographic consumer ethnocentrism and national attachment variables that are rarely used in tourism studies were employed to better understand the destination selection process of Russian tourists in the UW.

Keywords Russia, Consumer ethnocentrism, Domestic tourism, Outbound tourism, National attachment, Unstable world

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Regional conflicts, inter-religious tensions, incidents of terrorism and new challenges with respect to epidemiologic situations around the globe are the factors of instability that tourists have to negotiate before, during, and after their travel. According to ourworldindata.org, terrorism-related incidents in the world have greatly increased in numbers since September 11, 2001, when the attack on the World Trade Center towers took more than 3,000 lives (Roser et al., 2017). In 2001, there were 1,907 terrorism-related incidents in the world in total, while in 2016, there were 13,488 of such incidents. The peak was the year of 2014 with 16,860 incidents. While Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria are currently in the leading positions by both the number of incidents and fatalities, the threat of terrorism has also been growing in established tourist destination countries like Egypt (0 in 2001 vs 365 in 2016), Turkey (19 vs 540) and Greece (14 vs 31). The long-time favorites such as the UK (94 vs 104), France (21 vs 26) and Germany (8 vs 41) have too been affected and have raised their counter-terrorism efforts (Roser et al., 2017).

At the same time, the tourism industry remarkably recovered from a decline caused by the 9–11 tragedy, and since 2010 has demonstrated a stable growth (UNWTO, 2017). In 2016, the international arrivals grew by 3.9 percent, reaching the record number of 1.2bn. Three nations
that are leading the outbound tourism at present are China, the USA and the UK. Several countries, however, reported setbacks in international arrivals as compared to the previous 2015 year, apparently facing the aftermath of terrorism and security related incidents: France (−2 percent), Belgium (−10 percent), Russia (−9 percent), Turkey (−1 percent in 2015, no data for 2016) and Egypt (−42 percent) (UNWTO, 2017). The temporal dynamics of the arrival numbers suggest that incidents of terrorism have become a serious obstacle to destination countries and that tourists are carefully considering the new reality of increased threats to safety. Therefore, tourism risk research, with the emphasis on what influences decision making of actual and potential tourists in the destination selection process, continues to be timely and important.

The overall purpose of this study is to examine whether high profile negative events that involve acts of terrorism, political and social instability, inter-religious tensions, military conflicts around the world, epidemics and similar, affect desire of tourists to vacation abroad and make them turn to domestic travel (DT) as a substitute for international travel. The study uses Russian international tourists as a situational context, as in the recent years, the most favorite destinations of this tourist market, that is, Turkey, Egypt and Europe, have been affected by terrorism-related incidents of high visibility (ITE Travel and Tourism, 2016). International arrivals and expenditures from this previously very dynamic source market declined significantly in 2015. One reason for the decline is economic situation in Russia and depreciation of the ruble against virtually all other currencies (UNWTO, 2016). Another possible reason, we would speculate, is cultural: Russia has the score of 95 out of 100 on the uncertainty avoidance scale (Hofstede, 1980). For comparison, China, the USA and the UK have the scores of 30, 46 and 35, respectively.

In Russia, terrorism-related incidents grew during the First (1994–1996) and Second (1999–2009) Chechen Wars. They reached the peak in 2010 with 251 incidents and then rapidly declined to just 21 incidents in 2015 (Roser et al., 2017). Considering the vast tourist resources of the country and that the incidents are mostly contained to the Northern Caucasus region, DT is likely to be seen by Russian tourists as a viable, safe alternative to a riskier international travel. Further, besides the objective risks, there are subjective perceptions of those risks. These perceptions are not only culturally or demographically determined, they are highly influenced by how the incidents of instability are reported by government officials, public figures and by general and social media. In a situation of strained bilateral relations between Russia and a number of countries, most notably, the USA, Ukraine and Turkey (Levada Center, 2016), instances of instability in those countries receive intense, emotionally charged coverage in Russia (Herszenhorn, 2014), which contributes to perceptions of international travel as risky. In view of the discussed, Russian tourists constitute a suitable market to study the influence of world instability on tourist decision making.

The study, therefore, looks closely on decision making of Russian tourists regarding international and DT for leisure purposes and seeks understanding of how tourists navigate the threats of the unstable world (UW). More specifically, we are looking at how influenced tourists are by incidents of world instability and the news about these incidents in their decisions to select outbound destinations, and whether domestic tourism (DT) works as a substitute for a more dangerous international travel. Further, the study considers the influence of individual’s demographic characteristics, as well as their psychographic profile, namely, their level of national attachment and consumer ethnocentrism, that is, predisposition for protection of domestic economy in the individual’s consumption patterns, in the process of destination selection.

Literature review

Academic literature on travel risks is extensive, and its development has been accelerated after the 9–11 (Yang et al., 2017). A systematic review of only one of its aspects, namely, travel risks and gender, counted 84 studies (Yang et al., 2017). Perceived travel risks are understood as the individual’s evaluation of the levels of uncertainty and negative consequences of going to a destination (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005). They relate to a number of potential adverse conditions which may happen despite all careful planning on the part of the tourist. Perceived risks include issues with physical health and treatment, transportation, problems with service providers, crime against individual people and their property, as well as problems with destination...
environment, including ecology, natural disasters and situations of political and social turmoil. For example, young American adults indicate political instability, terrorism, political and religious dogma and crime among seven risks factors related to travel to Uganda (Lepp and Gibson, 2003). Risks of a more psychological nature include cultural barriers, inadequate language proficiency and fear of being lost or discriminated against (Simpson and Siguaw, 2008). Within the latter domain, Stepchenkova and Shichkova (2017) have identified risks of not being welcomed due to strained bilateral relations between country-destination and country-source market: the researchers found that Russian tourists are generally very positive to the idea to visit the USA, one of the most disliked countries in Russia (Levada Center, 2016); however, they want assurance that they will be welcomed there.

Personal safety has been a recurrent topic in the risk literature. Threats to personal safety stem not only from crime (e.g. Harper, 2006; Holcomb and Pizam, 2006) but from the violence that may happen when the incidents of terrorism as well as social and political conflicts in the country-destination occur (e.g. King and Berno, 2006; Tarlow, 2006); thus, tourists’ behavior following a terrorist attack is one of the prominent topics of current tourism research (Walters et al., 2018). While modeling with economic data generally indicate that such incidents result in decline of tourist numbers (Araña and León, 2008; McKercher and Hui, 2004), “of those who are likely to still travel to a destination threatened by terrorist activity, little is known as to how this threat, be it moderate or severe, will affect their travel related decisions” (Walters et al., 2018, p. 1). It has been shown, however, that factors such as past experience (Fittchainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998; Yechiam et al., 2005), the costs associated with avoiding the risks (Yechiam et al., 2005), and culture in terms of Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006; Yechiam et al., 2005) may play the role in this process (for a more detailed discussion, see Walters et al., 2018, p. 2).

Among those influential factors are general and social media translating “breaking news” about the incidents of instability, witnesses’ personal accounts, messages of opinion leaders and official advisory information. Propensity of the media to focus on negative news (Lexow and Edelheim, 2004) and sensationalized coverage of instability instances can potentially result in decreased arrival numbers regardless of the seriousness of the reported event (Walters et al., 2016). For example, the influence of the media is demonstrated by Fielding and Shortland (2009) who examined the effects of US television coverage of casualties in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on actual US tourist arrivals to Israel: the researchers found large statistical effects of actual Israeli casualties and reported Palestinian casualties on tourist flows. The findings suggest that reporting incidents of terrorism and instability by general and social media are likely to increase the subjective probability of such events in the mind of potential tourists and emotionally impact decision-making process of potential tourists. Most recently, Walters et al. (2018) examined changes in the tourists’ preference structures as a result of terrorist advisory information: the researchers found change in decisions related to such aspect of travel as accommodations and cancellation policy, independent vs group travel and price. The changes, however, are dependent on demographics, sensation seeking and travel knowledge factors. Not all studies, though, registered the effects of negative news on tourist arrivals: for example, Stepchenkova and Eales (2011) modeled arrivals from the UK to Russia and did not find the impact of news about terrorism and instability as reported in UK press on arrival numbers. A recent study by Wolfe and Larsen (2014) found that worries about terrorism of tourists to Norway, in fact, declined after the terrorist attack of July 22, 2011 when 77 people died and many more were injured as a result of two attacks by Anders Breivik. The research results indicate that the tourist behavior in response to terrorism and, wider, to instability incidents is likely to depend on characteristics of individuals, tourist market in general (its stable and situational characteristics), destination in question and the nature of negative events.

Risk perceptions vary among people, depending on socio-demographic and psychographic profile of a particular individual, strength of their risk beliefs and the destination’s characteristics (Cahyanto et al., 2014). Empirical studies, however, have provided mixed results with respect to the existence of relationships between perceptions of various risks and virtually any demographic variable, including gender, age, marital status, country of residence and income (Simpson and Siguaw, 2008;
This study, therefore, focuses not on a particular risk type but on the overall perception of instability of the world for travel. More specifically, it examines to what degree these perceptions influence tourist decision-making process to travel internationally or domestically. This approach allows to “depart” from looking at the tourist behavior in a particular “destination-negative event” context but rather focuses on characteristics of individual tourists and tourist market in general (in this case, current Russian market). Demographic variables of gender, age, education, life stage, travel experience (number of trips abroad) and income were used in the study. Two psychographic factors, an individual’s attachment to their home country and tourists’ ethnocentric tendencies, have been identified as theoretically relevant (Klein et al., 1998; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Verlegh, 2007) in the current Russian context. They were also judged potentially influential in negotiating between international or DT decisions, particularly in view of the situation in Russia described in the next section.

**Study context**

The study was carried out in March 2016. A number of high profile events manifesting instability in the world and dangers of international travel happened in less than a year and a half prior to the study that could have negatively affected the desire of Russian tourists for outbound travel and increased the propensity to vacation domestically. To outline the contextual situation for the study, we list below just seven of them – those that were widely publicized and discussed in Russia, in both general and social media. References are given using primarily Wikipedia.org as the most egalitarian information source where factual accuracy and writer’s bias is controlled by the multiple authors contributing to a particular entry (Giles, 2005; West and Williamson, 2009). Links to primary sources at the end of wiki entries allow for a more comprehensive and detailed descriptions of events for interested readers:

- **October 31, 2015.** The passenger plane of the Kogalymavia airline A321, which flew from Egypt’s Sharm el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg, crashed over the Sinai Peninsula. After investigation by Russian, British and Egyptian authorities, the reason for the crash has identified as terrorism (Wikipedia, 2017b).
- **November 24, 2015.** A Russian Sukhoi Su-24M shot down by Turkish Air Force F-16 fighter jet at the Syria-Turkey border. An ensued diplomatic Russia-Turkey crisis led to a number of economic sanctions on Turkey issued by the Russian government (Wikipedia, 2017d).
- **December 31, 2015.** Mass sexual assaults happened in Germany during the celebrations on the New Year Eve, mainly in the city of Cologne. Police report that 1,200 women were sexually assaulted and estimate that at least 2,000 men were involved, acting in groups. The attacks have been tied up to the migrant crisis in Europe (Wikipedia, 2017e).
- **January 2016.** A 13-year-old Russian-German girl was reported missing for over a day in Berlin and, after returning, claimed that that she had been kidnapped and raped by three strangers. While the case later had been proven false, Russia accused Germany of tolerating and covering up child abuse (Wikipedia, 2017f).
- **February 15, 2016.** First case of Zika virus is registered in Russia (Dobuzinskis, 2016). On January 30, Vladimir Putin ordered Russian scientists to develop a vaccine against Zika virus. Tourists are not advised to go to the Americas where multiple cases had been reported (Ross, 2016).

The UW situation and bilateral conflicts between Russia with a number of countries affected the tourism landscape as well. In May 22, 2015, advisory was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (registry item 1005-22-05-2015) for Russian citizens to carefully assess the risks of traveling to the USA. After the crash of A321 plane, the flights to Egypt from Russia have been suspended indefinitely. Economic sanctions on Turkey issued by
the Russian government after Turkey gunned down the Russian jet included termination of charter flights from Russia to Turkey, ban on the sales of holiday packages to Turkey resorts and calls for an end to visa-free travel between Russia and Turkey. In addition, foreign travel was restricted for large groups of civil servants many of whom constitute the Russian middle class: personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Ministry of Defense; the Federal Penitentiary Service; the Federal Prosecutor’s Office; and police officers (Lemondzhava, 2016). At the same time, programs to develop, support and encourage DT have been initiated by the Russian government; for example, the number of subsidized flights to Crimea has been increased (Montag-Girmes, 2017).

Individual preferences for domestic goods or imports have been extensively studied in the marketing literature, mainly within the country-of-origin domain. Besides the influential “made in [country name]” variable, the factors of consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma, 1987) and national attachment (Verlegh, 2007) have also been identified as affecting consumer decisions. The concept of consumer ethnocentrism understood as an individual’s tendency for protection of domestic economy has branched from a more encompassing sociological concept of ethnocentrism (Sumner, 1906), that is, a propensity of an individual to judge another culture by the values of their own culture (Levine and Campbell, 1972; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Verlegh, 2007). In marketing, consumer ethnocentrism refers to beliefs that consumers may hold about the “appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products” (Shimp and Sharma, 1987, p. 280). In general, the higher consumer ethnocentrism, the less favorably an individual evaluates quality attributes of imported goods and intention to buy them. However, several studies have shown that consumers may actually prefer foreign goods when they are clearly superior to the domestic alternatives (Elliott and Cameron, 1994; Klein et al., 1998). For example, Klein et al. (2006) found that Russian consumers did not discriminate against imported products with superior characteristics. International tourism as a special kind of consumer product can be a subject to the same considerations; however, little research exists in the tourism domain which have tapped into this variable (Stepchenkova et al., 2017; Stepchenkova et al., 2018).

Patriotic sentiment has been running strong in Russia since the events in Crimea in 2014 and incorporation of the territory into the Russian Federation. Prior to the study, Russia organized the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, attracted the Formula One race in the same year, conducted a number of world championships in 2015, and had been getting ready to host the 2017 FIFA Confederation Cup and 2018 FIFA World Cup. Russia had conducted a successful military reform (Ryhtik, 2011) and entered the conflict in Syria. Further, since domestic or foreign products convey social and cultural connotations (Askegaard and Ger, 1998), consuming them is an act to affirm one’s national identity (Verlegh, 2007). In response to Western sanctions, the Russian government retaliated by banning from the Russian market a wide range of food products produced in the USA, the European Union and other countries (Felgenhauer, 2014). This action was largely approved by the Russian population because it was seen as providing opportunities to develop domestic food industries. In the words of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, “the ban will bring Russia much good—the shelves in our malls will be cleared and filled with Russian produce—we must not miss such an opportunity to expand import replacement” (Felgenhauer, 2014, citing Russian news agency Interfax, August 7, 2014). Against such a backdrop, a number of people turned to DT, especially to Crimea, for patriotic reasons (Kirillova et al., 2018; Stepchenkova and Shichkova, 2017).

The discussion above sets the stage for formulation of the study’s main question: How do concerns with the world instability influence Russian tourists’ decisions to travel internationally and domestically? More specifically, the study aims to answer several inter-related questions: (1) To what degree perceptions of world instability affect travel decisions of Russian tourists? (2) Which demographic (gender, age, education, life stage, income, and travel experience) and psychographic (national attachment and consumer ethnocentrism) characteristics make a person more susceptible to threats of instability in their decision making? (3) Do risks to travel internationally translate to increased desire for DT? and (4) How demographics of tourists, consumer ethnocentrism, and national attachment affect a desire of Russian tourists to travel domestically?
Method

Sample

The study was conducted on March 26, 2016 on a campus of a renowned Russian university, in a city of Nizhni Novgorod (population: 1.3m people) located in Central Russia. The city itself is a place of historic and cultural significance and also an industrial and educational center that serves as a transportation hub as well. More than 70 travel agencies operate in the city and the surrounding region, and the city is well connected by regular and charter flights with multiple tourist destinations in Russia and abroad. The university’s Tourism Research Center actively recruited participants for the study targeting outbound tourists from the Russian middle class, whose lifestyles and consumption patterns increasingly include leisure travel (Ipsos Comcon Report, 2017). Participants had to be at least 18 years old; not to be students at the university, and had to have traveled internationally at least once in the three years prior to the study. International travel was defined as visiting countries outside the current boarders of the Russian Federation and could have included travel to CIS states (the former Soviet Union republics). For a study purpose different from the one reported in this paper, there was one more requirement to the participants: none of them visited the USA. Thus, on a particular date, 139 people came to the designated campus location to take part in the study.

Overall, the gender composition of the sample was skewed toward females (63 vs 37 percent). Age-wise, the respondents were fairly young: the mean age was 31 years old and standard deviation was 11 years. They were well educated overall: all of them were high school graduates while 73 percent had a degree from an institution of the higher education. Three observations fell in the other category and were treated as missing values, making education an ordinal variable with four categories. Income-wise, the respondents were distributed almost evenly among the provided income groups: approximately one-third of them belonged to the two lowest, medium and highest income categories. In total, 15 percent of respondents did not have children while 41 percent had one child or more. In three years prior to the study, 26 percent traveled to CIS countries only; beyond the CIS countries, 31 percent had one trip, 29 percent made two or three trips, while the remaining 14 percent traveled four or more times. It was concluded that the profile of respondents was consistent with the Russian middle class, that is, younger and educated urban residents who incorporate international travel into their lifestyle.

Instrument

The study took a form of a self-completed questionnaire. The main variables of interest were named “unstable world” (UW) and “domestic travel” (DT). Variable UW measured respondents’ self-awareness of the influence that various risk factors associated with the travel in the UW exert on their decision to vacation internationally: on a scale of 1 (no influence) to 10 (high influence), how does the level of instability in the world (terrorism, military and ethnic conflicts, epidemics, etc.) influence your desire to vacation abroad? Variable DT was meant to serve as an indicator of to what degree the domestic travel was used as a substitute for international tourism in the UW. It was operationalized as: Did your desire to vacation in Russia change in the last 1.5 years? The answer choices were given as increased, decreased and did not change.

The operationalization of consumer ethnocentrism followed Shimp and Sharma (1987) and Verlegh (2007). It had six indicator items: e.g., a real Russian should always buy Russian-made products or it is not right to buy foreign products because it puts Russians out of jobs. The national attachment variable was represented by three items (Verlegh, 2007): to live in Russia means a lot to me; I am proud to live in Russia; and I feel very strong connection with Russia. The psychographic variables were measured on the seven-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree, 7 – Strongly Agree), with larger scores indicating higher presence of a respective trait. The demographic block of variables included gender, age (number of full years at the time of the study), education (high school; some college; bachelor degree, postgraduate degree), life stage (seven categories: e.g., family no kids or family, at least one child left home), income (six categories) and travel experience (number of trips in three years prior to the study).
Results

Preliminary analyses

The Cronbach’s αs for six consumer ethnocentrism items and three national attachment items were 0.94 and 0.90, respectively. Therefore, two manifest variables, consumer ethnocentrism (CET) and national attachment (NAT), representing the psychographic profile of the respondents was created by averaging the original individual indicators. The correlation between the two manifest variables CET and NAT was 0.33, indicating sufficient discriminate validity of the two constructs. Overall, NAT and CET scores had the median value of 6.0 (Mean = 5.6, SD = 1.2) and 3.0 (Mean = 3.1, SD = 1.4), respectively, on the seven-point scale.

Using current situational context in Russia as a backdrop for the study, the researchers investigated whether tourists in their decisions regarding international travel are influenced by the external high profile events closely associated with travel risks. Judging by the descriptive statistics of the UW variable, high profile events such as terrorist attacks, military conflicts, diseases, etc., noticeably influence tourists’ desire to vacation abroad: Mean = 6.5, Median = 7.0 and SD = 2.6 on a ten-point UW scale. Finally, the desire for DT increased for 54 respondents, decreased for seven respondents and stayed the same for 78 respondents. This variable was recoded into two categories: DT1 (increase: 54 responses, or 39 percent) and DT0 (no increase: 85 responses, or 61 percent). The descriptive statistics for NAT, CET, UW, and DT variables are given in Table I.

UW: regression analysis

With respect to which demographic and psychographic variables affect receptiveness to risks of traveling abroad, the hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted. At the first step, demographic variables were entered, followed by the two psychographic variables at the second step. When all variables were used in the model, it exhibited the signs of multicollinearity. The two variables, age and life stage, were practically interchangeable, given their high bivariate correlation (r = 0.83). To reduce multicollinearity, the age variable was retained and the life stage variable was excluded. Education was treated as a categorical and income as a numerical variables. The solution with gender, age, education, income, number of trips abroad, NAT, and CET acting as predictors explained 22 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable UW (Table II).

In the regression solution, 18 percent of the total variance was explained by demographic variables, and additional 4 percent by the psychographic variables; however, only gender, age, income and NAT variables were significant in the final model. The results indicate that women and older people (or those in later stages of life) are more influenced by incidents of world instability in their decisions to travel internationally; these variables were the two strongest predictors (t = −3.17, p = 0.002 and t = 2.65, p = 0.009, respectively). Those with higher incomes are less influenced in their decision making by instability in the world (t = −2.14, p = 0.034). Respondents, who are more attached to their own country, are also influenced more (t = 2.19, p = 0.030).

DT: logistic regression

Two research questions deal with the most influential variables affecting the propensity of Russian tourists to turn to domestic vacation in the world with increased risks for international travel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer ethnocentrism (CET)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National attachment (NAT)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>−1.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable world (UW)*</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>−0.5</td>
<td>−0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic travel (DT) Increase: freq (%)</td>
<td>54 (38.8)</td>
<td>No Increase: freq (%)</td>
<td>85 (61.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *Ten-point rating scale. Variables CET and NAT are summated seven-point Likert scale.
The domestic travel variable (DT) is categorical: 0 stands for “no increase in desire to travel in Russia” and 1 stands for “the desire to travel domestically increased.” To predict the binary outcomes, logistic regression was the method of choice (Pallant, 2016). The initial model, that included demographic, psychographic and UW predictors, correctly classified 69 percent of all cases (gender and education were treated as nominal variables, while income acted as a numerical predictor), but only income and UW variables had significant and marginally significant effects (\( p = 0.007 \) and \( p = 0.079 \), respectively) (Table III, Model 1). For the sake of model parsimony, variables with insignificant Wald’s statistic were removed, and three variables were identified as the most influential in predicting predisposition for DT: income, consumer ethnocentrism and UW (Table III, Model 2).

A test of the full model with three predictors against a “constant only” model was statistically significant, indicating that the three predictors combined reliably distinguished between increase (DT = 1) and no increase (DT = 0) respondents in the sample (\( \chi^2 = 20.26, \text{df} = 3, p < 0.001 \)). The Homer–Lemeshow test statistic greater than 0.05 indicates support for the model (Pallant, 2016). The model explains between 14 percent (Cox & Snell \( R^2 \)) and 18 percent (Nagelkerke’s \( R^2 \)) of variation in the DT variable. Overall accuracy of the classification was 69 percent, same as in the model with all predictors; however, classification increase/no increase categories of respondents noticeably varied: 84 percent (DT = 0) and 46 percent (DT = 1). The Wald statistic demonstrated that income was the strongest of the three predictors (\( p = 0.005 \)). Contribution of CET was marginally significant (\( p = 0.051 \)). Odds ratio (exponentiated \( \beta \)) indicates change in odds to report increase in desire to vacation in Russia when the respective indicator moves up one unit, all other things being equal (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2007). With one unit increase in CET scores, the odds of reporting increased desire to vacation in Russia increase by the factor of 1.30, or 30 percent one unit increase in UW leads to 17 percent higher odds of DT taking value of 1. However, the larger the income, the less likely DT will take a value of 1. More specifically, with moving to a lower bracket by one step, the odds of reporting increased desire to vacation in Russia increase by the factor of 1/0.71 = 1.41, or 41 percent (Pallant, 2016). Overall, the results indicate that those Russian tourists who are affected more by the world instability in their plans for international travel and those with higher ethnocentric tendencies are more likely to turn to the domestic alternative as a substitute. Those with higher incomes, however, are less likely to choose DT in the same situation.

### Table II  Linear regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Std B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Adj. ( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT 0</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>4.137</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ_HighSchool</td>
<td>−0.30</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
<td>−0.28</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ_SomeCollege</td>
<td>−0.56</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>−0.08</td>
<td>−0.57</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educ_Bachelor</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>−0.16</td>
<td>−1.76</td>
<td>0.081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trips abroad</td>
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<td>−0.13</td>
<td>−1.52</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT 0</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>3.896</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educ_HighSchool</td>
<td>−0.69</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>−0.08</td>
<td>−0.64</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ_SomeCollege</td>
<td>−0.92</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>−0.13</td>
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<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>−0.20</td>
<td>−2.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trips abroad</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
<td>−0.12</td>
<td>−1.39</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NAT</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<td>0.030</td>
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<tr>
<td>CET</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>−0.06</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: NAT, national attachment; CET, consumer ethnocentrism. Dependent variable: unstable world. Gender codes: male – 0; female – 1. ns, not significant at 0.10 level
Discussion

While demographic variables and their influence on tourist decision making have been extensively studied, albeit with inconsistent results pertaining, at least to some degree, to different situational contexts (Yang et al., 2017), the psychographic variables of consumer ethnocentrism and national attachment have been examined noticeably less. This study was interested in the joint effect of these two groups of variables on decision making of Russian tourists in the context of increased travel risks to personal safety in international travel and turning to DT as a result of those risks. While it is acknowledged that there are multiple variables not included in the study that affect the desire to travel internationally and domestically (e.g. financial constraints, individual risk tolerance or lack of time due to personal circumstances), the analyses were seeking to estimate the exploratory power of the demographic characteristics and the effects of psychographic factors of national attachment and consumer ethnocentrism on decisions of Russian tourists. The inclusion of the psychographic variables and the context of the study, with its focus on the world instability, are considered as two main contributions of this research to the travel risks literature.

For a balanced appreciation of the study findings, we would like to remind the reader that the risks perceptions were examined “indirectly” in this research. The instability of the current situation in the world with respect to terrorism incidents and regional conflicts is a “given” in this study, as well as the higher risks of international travel associated with these events. The focus, therefore, is not on whether or not Russian tourists perceive travel as risky or what kind of risks they consider the most likely to materialize, but on to what degree those perceptions influence their decisions to travel internationally and domestically. As follows from the operationalization of the UW variable, the influence in affecting decisions does not necessarily mean that those who are highly influenced by incidents of instability in the world would automatically prefer DT. It rather means that negative events associated with travel risks would make tourists weigh more carefully various options and negotiate harder among pros and cons of several alternatives before choosing the one they are comfortable with. For example, sun seekers, one of the five large groups of the Russian tourist market (ITE Travel & Tourism, 2016), who had been going to Turkey every year, might decide to go to Greece or Mallorca instead; but there would also be those

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table III</th>
<th>Logistic regression analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 1:</strong> variables</td>
<td><strong>B Coeff.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage accuracy in classification: 69.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edu_PostGrad</td>
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<td>Edu_HighSchool</td>
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<td>Edu_SomeCollege</td>
<td>1.07</td>
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<td>Edu_Bachelor</td>
<td>1.49</td>
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<td>Income</td>
<td>−0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trips abroad</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
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<td>National attachment</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer ethnocentrism</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable world</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosmer–Lemeshow test: $\chi^2 = 8$, df = 8, p = 0.074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox and Snell $R^2$: 0.162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$: 0.221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>−0.34</td>
</tr>
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<td>Consumer ethnocentrism</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable world</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosmer–Lemeshow test: $\chi^2 = 6.085$, df = 8, p = 0.638</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox and Snell $R^2$: 0.136</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$: 0.184</td>
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**Notes:** Dependent variable: domestic travel. Gender codes: male – 0; female – 1. ns, not significant at 0.10 level
who would prefer to give up international travel altogether and opt for a vacation in Russia or simply travel less frequently.

Out of six demographic variables, gender had the strongest effect on influencing decisions to travel internationally in the situation of world instability. The finding that women are more receptive to perceived risks of travel abroad concurs with Yang et al. (2017): their literature review on risk and gender found that 70 percent of the surveyed studies report the same result. Those who are older have higher scores on the UW variable as well. The influence of gender and age variables, however, does not extend directly on decision to select a domestic destination for travel, as neither of them is significant in the logistic regression analysis. In contrast, the income variable is significant in both regression analyses. Those Russian tourists who are wealthier worry the least, possibly because if anything happens in their preferred vacation place, they can easily switch to a less dangerous and more stable international destination. This conclusion is supported by the influence that income exerts on the DT variable: wealthier people are less likely to choose a domestic destination.

Out of the two psychographic variables, only national attachment is significant in the hierarchical linear regression as a predictor of the UW variable. At the same time, national attachment is not influential for the increased desire in DT. We would speculate that Russian tourists with higher national attachment have already been predisposed to DT, and the latest negative incidents of world instability only confirmed their views that the world is a dangerous place and that they were right to prefer the domestic vacations in the first place. Conversely, consumer ethnocentrism was not significant in the linear regression analysis but became marginally significant in the logistic regression analysis. As ethnocentric tendencies of tourists reflect a propensity to defend the domestic economy in a situation of conflict, economic sanctions, and increased risks for international travel, those with higher consumer ethnocentrism scores are more likely to turn to domestic destinations.

Domestic destinations may seem a safer choice in an unstable global environment for Russian tourists; thus, 39 percent of respondents reported increased desire to travel within Russia. Yet, for 61 percent of respondents, a desire to vacation in Russia did not increase. These results indicate that Russian tourists may not be ready to sacrifice the consumption of quality foreign tourism brands at present (Stepchenkova et al., 2017; Stepchenkova and Shichkova, 2017). The findings of the study also concur with what has been reported by Seabra et al. (2014) who found that a large share of tourists (almost 50 percent) will not be deterred from travel despite apparent risks to safety. For example, high uncertainty avoidance of the Russian society, its low tolerance of ambiguity, less willingness to take risks and higher dependency on structured rules (Hofstede, 1980) do not preclude Russians from going to Turkey despite the instances of political turmoil and terrorism in the country (Roser et al., 2017).

In 2017, Russian arrivals to Turkey bounced back and are at a four-year high (Vasilchuk, 2017). Granted, the format of all-inclusive resorts, the main Turkish product that Russian tourists consume, is characterized, arguably, by the least amount of uncertainty. Nevertheless, travel behavior of Russian tourists in this example exhibits that “what is to be, will be” attitude expressed in the popular Russian sayings like “Man proposes: God disposes,” “One cannot escape from fate” and similar. This feature of the Russian psyche is famously examined in the novel “Fatalist” from the classical work of the Russian literature “Hero of Our Time” by M. Lermontov.

In the current situation, the economic aspect of decision making of Russian tourists seems to prevail, as the desire to travel abroad or chose the domestic destination is affected by income the most. The weakening of the ruble in relation to other main currencies noticeably increased price for international travel for Russian tourists. While the Russian government uses this situation to support DT, especially to Sochi and Crimea, the efforts of regional legislatures and offices responsible for tourism development can be directed to making their DT offer more attractive for those who cannot afford or unwilling to take international vacations in view of increased risks to safety. Currently, Russian people perceive domestic alternatives as inferior to international tourism offer, especially in terms of value for money (Stepchenkova and Shichkova, 2017). The patriotic demand for DT may dissipate if Russian governing bodies responsible for tourism development do not come up quickly with an affordable tourism quality product available domestically. For the city of
Nizhni Novgorod and surrounding region, the timing is especially right as the city works on upgrading the existing and developing new tourism infrastructures as one of the host locations of 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Limitations and future research

From the statistical viewpoint, the overall variances explained by each regression models, HLR and LR, are relatively small. While in the explanatory studies (as opposed to the predictive models) researchers are less concerned with the size of the $R^2$ and similar measures like Nagelkerke's $R^2$ (Frost, 2014), low $R^2$ indicates that the models are likely to miss other important predictors. Only two psychographic variables, national attachment and consumer ethnocentrism, were considered in this study, while a number of potentially relevant psychographic (e.g. animosity toward the West Heinberg, 2017) and contextual (e.g. characteristics of tourism service offerings Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005) variables were not included. The logistic regression better models the no increase in interest in DT response than the increased interest response, further indicating that the number of potential influential factors needs to be expanded.

While feasible explanation for the effect of income has been suggested and the findings with respect to gender are in concurrence with previous studies, the influence of the age variable needs further investigation. The experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) suggests that the learning process involves abstract conceptualizations and active experimentations. Since, arguably, the older people have accumulated more in-depth reflections and experimentations as compared to the younger people, the risk perceptions between people of different ages may vary. However, the theory does not specify which age group is more risk averse, as the knowledge gained from experience as well as critical reflections can point to opposing directions. With respect to the number of trips abroad, age groups in the sample did not differ ($F(3, 135) = 0.45, p = 0.715$), indicating the comparable travel experience. The respondents’ travel type (e.g. whether the person is a thrill seeker or sun seeker), however, has not been obtained in the study. Thus, further research is necessary to uncover the interplay of age, risk perceptions, travel experiences, and the tourist type.

The issue of the sample size may be considered as a limitation of the study. While the data collection focused on recruiting respondents with a profile of active Russian international tourist and achieved the sample size sufficient for conducted regression analyses (Hair et al., 2013), it would have been desirable to have a larger sample to increase the power of analyses. For example, with more respondents, the marginally significant influence of CET variable might have come out stronger. Results from two-way ANOVA on the interaction effect between age and income were not included, as a few cells were insufficiently populated (4–7 cases) to present the results with confidence. Unfortunately, a one-time data collection study design precluded the research team from collecting additional samples.

In conclusion, the study contributes to understanding of how tourists’ demographic and psychographic characteristics influence their perceptions of world instability and resulting travel decisions using the Russian tourist market as the context of the study. The study identified gender, age and income as the important factors influencing tourists’ decisions to vacation internationally. Being receptive to the risks of international travel, however, does not necessarily mean that the DT would be automatically preferred. Furthermore, wealthier Russian tourists are less likely to turn to domestic destinations as a response to threats of the UW. Those who are more influenced by the perceived risks of the international travel are more likely to turn to the domestic vacations; however, the overall conclusion is that DT is only a partial substitute for international travel for Russian tourists. National attachment is identified as a factor that contributes to negotiating harder between pros and cons of international travel in tourist decision-making process, in a situation of increased risks to personal safety while traveling internationally. Consumer ethnocentrism contributes to the increased desire for DT in the UW, together with the income and perceptions of risks factors. On the whole, the study findings indicate that in a context of global instability, personal demographic and psychological traits impact decision making of tourists with respect to selection of international or domestic destinations.
References


Further reading

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Urban tourism hypertrophy: who should deal with it? The case of Krakow (Poland)

Piotr Zmyšlony and Joanna Kowalczyk-Anioł

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to analyze the phenomenon of urban tourism hypertrophy (UTH) in the context of the process of tourism-related social conflicts formation; and second, to discuss the extent to which destination management organizations (DMOs) are prepared to take responsibilities and actions undertaken in this process.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper adopts conflict management (CM) theory as a framework for discussing UTH within the city context. The paper then analyzes the empirical example of social conflict in Kraków (Poland) to assess the predispositions of key institutions engaged in destination governance to lead CM process triggered by UTH. The Circle of Conflict approach proposed by C. Moore (The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2014) is utilized as the main application method.

Findings – The study shows that DMO is the most appropriate entity to deal with UTH as a conflict manager; however, it has insufficient resources to fulfill all requirements relating to that role. Therefore, the range of responsibilities and roles of the contemporary DMOs should be completed with CM as the permanent task during UTH crisis.

Research limitations/implications – The example study was based on interviews carried out with a limited number of informants. Also, the contextual nature of the research as well as specific destination governance structure in Kraków blurred the picture of DMOs predispositions to leading the CM process.

Practical implications – The study supports urban DMO managers by suggesting a tool of diagnosis and intervention in UTH-induced conflicts. Thus, it makes fulfilling the mediator role a destination governance task.

Social implications – CM brings agreement among parties as to the understanding of the nature of conflict, which forms the basis for quick and mutually agreed actions, according to sustainable development principles.

Originality/value – The paper proposes an alternative approach to mitigate UTH-related problems in cities by adopting the CM framework which emphasizes the universal nature of conflict causes and proposes adequate tools for undertaking actions by DMOs.

Keywords Conflict management, DMO, Overtourism, Destination governance, Social conflicts, Urban tourism hypertrophy

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The nature of contemporary urban tourism raises the question about its consequences. Apart from the undeniable positive results, negative effects also appear: gentrification and housing crisis induced by short-term tourism rental boom (Füller and Michel, 2014; Opillard, 2016; Gravari-Barbas and Guinand, 2017), overcrowding and improper tourist’s behavior (Pixová and Sládek, 2016), nightlife’ disturbances (Hae, 2012) and “heritagetization” (Opillard, 2016). Not always are they the effects of the poorly played market game, i.e. the lack of allocation of the property rights with regard to public goods and the “vicious circle of tourism development” mechanism (Russo, 2002). Many of these dysfunctions are interrelated and appear to have to do with tourism development, because they are negative externalities that undermine the quality of urban life. However, it seems that the times of uncritical urban tourism boosterism without social responsibility approach have passed irrevocably. Tourism has become an important urban issue and a challenge for their residents, policy makers and tourism managers.
Furthermore, these transformations have created new research areas and determine the need for interdisciplinary cooperation, especially for urban studies and urban geography as well as tourism planning and management. The paper aims to fill the gap in this field of study, which is relatively little recognized. The limited heuristic power of the existing concepts of the twenty-first-century tourist city has created a need for the search for new management solutions to deal with mass tourism in neoliberal urban reality and give a rise of social science perspective within a conflict management (CM) framework.

The term “overtourism” that has come from media discourse has recently become part of political and scientific discussion (Goodwin, 2017; Hall, 2018; Milano, 2018; Muler Gonzalez et al., 2018; Seraphin et al., 2018), leading to tourism gentrification being conceptualized in context (e.g. Cócola-Gant, 2016; Kowalczyk-Aniol, 2018), diagnoses and examples (García-Hernández et al., 2017) and search for possible actions (Blanco-Romero et al., 2018). UNWTO (2018) and WTTC (2017) also refer directly to them in the latest reports on the subject.

Notwithstanding, we argue that the phenomenon should be discussed more thoroughly as could be conceptualized as a metaphor of urban tourism hypertrophy (UTH) (Kowalczyk-Aniol, 2018). UTH is a state of urban self-regulation process being disrupted by hypertrophy of tourist function which poses a threat to endogenous urban functions, especially housing, trading, etc. This constitutes a non-sustainable stage of a city which is closely related to the growth in consumption as a global model development and transformations of postindustrial cities, especially their inner city (Soja, 1995, 2005). Therefore, theorization of the UTH phenomenon reflects on forming tourism-related social conflicts which emerge as a component of social relations of the city. Actual or perceived negative externalities of UTH are researched the most often (Colomb and Novy, 2016; Milano, 2018). UTH – and especially residents’ protests in European cities – is characterized by its media coverage and politicization, with both being its significant components.

Therefore, UTH-induced protests should be treated as verifying the urban tourism policies conducted so far. Quite often city governments’ declarations that it is necessary to adapt tourism development to local aspirations and carrying capacity do not correlate with addressing tourism as a management and planning issue (Novy, 2016). Acceptance of sustainable development paradigm and, at the same time, escalation of tourism-related conflicts mean that “[p]olicy-makers and tourism organizations have been challenged by the need to balance the social and economic effects of tourism” (Qiu Zhang et al., 2017, pp. 61-2).

That is why UTH as a tourism development stage requires multi-layer, integrated, strategic decisions concerning the entire tourism system in “infected” cities. Parallel to this strategic orientation, UTH-induced conflicts trigger a need for definite decisions and prompt actions. Analysis from the viewpoint of conflicts enables combining these two perspectives using CM concept (Rahim, 2002; Thomas, 1992), which suggests certain strategies, tools and procedures. However, the heterogeneous and fragmented nature of tourism industry makes it hard to determine who should deal with the problem.

In the CM framework three aspects are significant (Rahim, 2002): what the conflict sources are, what activities form the process of CM and who should initiate and conduct it. Therefore, the CM approach raises a question about the destination leadership that should manage this process within the urban tourism system. As destination management organizations (DMOs) have been assigned more responsibilities, more attention has been paid to their (as well as local governments’) roles within destination governance, focusing on interorganizational relationships management, negotiation skills, seeking consensus as well as ensuring transparency of activities, ensuring equal stakeholders rights, distribution of power within tourist destination, managing destination knowledge and building know-how and trust (Beritelli et al., 2007; Pechlaner et al., 2009; Pechlaner et al., 2014; Ruhanen, 2013; Ruhanen et al., 2010; Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014, 2015).

Consequently, we argue that as UTH-related conflicts occur, they verify the next stage of destination governance evolution and the changing role of DMOs. Therefore, the aim of the paper is twofold. First, it discusses the phenomenon of UTH in the context of the process of tourism-related social conflicts’ formation. Second, it analyzes how DMOs and other key organizations can take a leading role in CM induced by UTH by verifying the scope of relevant responsibilities and actions.
In other words, there are following questions to answer: what actions should be taken to mitigate the effects of UTH and who should take responsibility for these actions?

Conducting research in UTH-related conflicts within destination governance poses a challenge for a number of reasons. First, as a non-continuous and spatially dispersed phenomenon, it concerns an increasing, yet a relatively low number of cities, whereas it is not possible to determine their general population because no widely accepted measurement methods have been developed. Second, these conflicts are non-homogeneous and multi-threaded so their links with tourism are verbalized in a number of ways. Additionally, their course, dynamics and intensity are varied from latent to manifest disputes. They also have a diversified level of formality and media coverage, and thus are poorly documented. Third, destination governance solutions and the range of responsibilities performed by DMOs differ in cities, which impacts the degree to which they are prepared to manage them. Finally, both UTH and the generated conflicts are inextricably related to social, cultural, economic, political and administrative contexts in which they appear. Moreover, there are also differences in values and interests, access to information or organizing degree of conflicted parties. This all means having to treat each “problem city” as a separate case study while recognizing the rationale and dynamics of UTH-related conflicts, although a universal tool is needed for an intervention scheme. To juxtapose these both aspects, the concept of Moore’s (2014) Circle of Conflict is utilized as the most structured tool for conflict analysis and management. Its strength lies in its usefulness to recognize the structure and dynamics of conflicts not on the basis of the content or position of the parties but rather conflict sources with a universal nature.

Considering the above, the empirical part of the paper is based on the example of Kraków, the only Polish city where UTH-induced conflict has taken the form of a manifested dispute. The research is mainly based on a structured interview method with the representatives of key institutions engaged in destination governance and UTH-related conflicts.

The paper consists of four parts. First, the threefold literature review is conducted in order to: discuss UTH phenomenon in the context of the formation of social conflicts; introduce CM in the destination context; and present the evolution of roles and tasks of DMOs. Then, the paper presents the research method and describes the destination studied. Following the results section, final findings and discussion are carried out regarding application of the CM theory in destination governance and predispositions of DMO to managing UTH-induced conflicts.

Literature review

Urban tourism hypertrophy as an issue of urban conflict

The important trends that have shaped the character and structure of nowadays cities as well as the genesis of UTH are: entrepreneurialism as an urban governance model (Harvey 1989), cultural urban regeneration (Bianchini, 1993; Tay and Coca-Stefaniak, 2010), tourismification as an urban strategy (Lloyd and Clark, 2001; Hoffman, 2003) and tourism gentrification as a tool of city development (Kowalczyk-Anioł and Afshar, 2018). Thus, UTH (Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2018) is a wide umbrella concept which includes the following phenomena felt by city’s residents (Figure 1): first,
city cores excessively saturated with tourists (and other visitors) as well as tourism supply, which undermines the quality of urban life and limits use of urban resources and facilities; second, urban costs outweighing benefits from tourism development – excessive use of urban resources (negative social, infrastructural, economic and environmental externalities); third, spatial order being disrupted as tourism dominates public spaces; and fourth, limiting decision making and increased dependence on global actors with an economic and political power; risk of social and economic stagnation.

UTH is formed by a series of multi-level relationships as well as positive and negative feedback. It emphasizes dialectic interactions between dynamic urban space and city residents, increasingly directed at external city users (Martinotti, 1993). It also expresses intense global and macro-social processes toward increasingly unreliable mechanisms of urban planning and management. Thus, UHT refers especially to the state of balancing on the edge of or even exceeding the tourist carrying capacity threshold in physical, economic, social and cultural dimension of a city (Troitiño, 2003; van der Borg, 2004). It is usually manifested by a dynamically growing intensity and volumes of tourist flows and supply, which increases the city’s sensitivity to carrying capacity and the strength of feedback between all its dimensions.

Paradoxically, UTH is not a new or beyond current scientific and practical considerations. On the contrary, the awareness of excessive use of limited resources has triggered global discussion on the limits of growth since the Club of Rome’s report was published (Meadows et al., 1972), shaping a widely accepted and desired idea of sustainable development also present in tourism studies (e.g. Butler, 1999; Butowski, 2019; Inskoop, 1991; Saarinen, 2006). Starting with Turner and Ash (1975), researchers have attempted to define the tourist carrying capacity thresholds (e.g. Canestrelli and Costa, 1991; Getz, 1983; O’Reilly, 1986; van der Borg et al., 1996; van der Borg, 2004) or principles of optimal tourism planning (Lew 2014; Saarinen et al., 2017). In recent years, more attention has been focused on tourism resilience, which is close but not identical to sustainable development (cf. e.g. Cheer and Lew, 2018). However, as Saarinen et al. (2017) observe, we have been further than ever from sustainability. As Hall (2018) adds, the debate should be an inseparable part of the global discussion on the limits of growth.

Unsustainability is being felt by both tourist peripheral and central destinations, including cities with a diversified economies and established position with tourism being a complimentary urban function. The bigger and bigger fragments of their space have uncontrollably turned into a tourist colonization and tourist urbanization spaces (Liszewski, 1995) that deepen the social and spatial fragmentation and segregation of the city while shaping new socio-spatial relations at the same time (e.g. Colomb and Novy, 2016; Kotus et al., 2015). Although the problem of tourism pressure and the limits of tourism growth can be described as “old wine in new bottles” (Dredge, 2017), its urban context, especially in Europe, has shown how the realities of its social and political perception have changed.

Significantly, despite the fact that the role of resident support in sustainable tourism development is widely recognized (e.g. Simpson, 2001; Cole 2006; Timur and Getz, 2009), local empowerment seems to stem from pressure from tourism hypertrophy as experienced by urban residents rather than from realization of a harmonious idea of the state-led sustainable development scenario, and takes a form of constituted and consolidated anti-tourism urban movements (Colomb and Novy, 2016; Russo and Scarnato, 2018). Nowadays, such manifestations are becoming a strong voice in wide public discussion about “the right to the city” that goes beyond the scientific considerations of urban and tourism studies (Shaw and Graham, 2017; Shields, 2013).

Conflicts are “manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities” (Rahim, 2002, p. 207). According to Coser (1956), conflict-generating mechanisms are inherent in the structure of society and are manifested in varied access to power and resources. External, i.e. intergroup, conflicts are associated with the mechanism of construing an external enemy who can be a majority group, which is perceived as hostile to goals, needs and aims of minority groups. The presence of enemy means power to defend a group’s own values and interests. Massive numbers of tourists in a city seen by inhabitants in destinations affected by UTH could be a case of such enemies, which explain tourismophobia.
in Barcelona (Alvarez-Sousa, 2018). The source of the UTH conflicts is often seen as prioritization of tourism as a policy domain and a laissez-faire approach to tourism adopted by the local state (Füller et al., 2018; Novy, 2016; Pixová and Sládek, 2016). Power imbalance between parties is also stressed (Dredge, 2017; Yang et al., 2013). In some destinations like Belfast or Hong Kong, anti-tourism protests overlap with existing conflicts rooted in ideological, cultural or geopolitical issues (Colomb and Novy, 2016). There are also global actors which are the focus in the heated disputes, like cruise companies, but they usually are not directly involved (Bowen et al., 2017; Vianello, 2016).

Social conflicts create various associations and coalitions which, in effect, provide a structure for a wider social environment (Coser, 1956). This is illustrated by anti-tourism urban movements which consolidate local communities around “right to a city.” There is a variety of parties in tourism-related conflicts: individual movers and shakers, groups of social activists, resident associations or city social movements, political groups, entrepreneurs, local authorities, rarely well-structured and institutionalized tenant movements, commonhold or condominium associations (Opillard, 2016; Russo and Scarnato, 2018).

According to Mouffe’s (2000) suggestion concerning the model of urban democracy, it is advisable to try to change antagonistic relationships into agonistic ones in the process of conflict. The aim of the process is to develop and ensure space for implementing various practices through negotiations based on respect toward adversaries. Nevertheless, to have it achieved, the CM strategy needs to be implemented in a city. Sommer and Helbrecht (2017, p. 166) claim that "tourism policy research in the future needs further research on the interrelation of well-established ways of understanding tourism numerically […] and more recent government attention on urban tourism conflicts shaping the future urban fabric." However, applying the tools of even diagnosis of conflicts accompanying urban tourism development (Postma and Schmuecker, 2017) and attempts at managing them are occasional (e.g. Füller et al., 2018; Martins, 2018). At most, the possibilities of a conflict are discussed (e.g. Ioannides et al., 2018). However, researchers declare the resentment for strategic diagnosis of conflicts lamenting that “[m]ass tourism destinations need to have a system for collecting information on their social carrying capacity before “conflict breaks out and is reported by the mass media” (Alvarez-Sousa, 2018, p. 25), and also before “the negative impacts of tourism begin to overshadow the positive […] and […] anti-tourism sentiments grow” (Ruhanen, 2013, p. 80). Jenkins et al. (2011) remark that the interactions between visitors and local environment usually cause a concern only when stresses or strains emerge in the destination, related with too high visitor volumes or the frequency of their visits in comparison to the accepted thresholds or their inappropriate behavior. Such situations prove the low quality or even lack of destination policy and planning. However, recent actions against UTH implemented in European cities (Seraphin et al., 2018) indicate the importance of soft actions like sharing knowledge with and educating tourists on negative impacts of tourism on local community and launching respect campaigns.

**Conflict management in the tourism destination context**

CM refers to strategic intervention in a conflict aimed at minimizing its dysfunctions and enhancing its constructive functions, and its main principle is to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization. Therefore, CM is a wider construct than its resolution as it “does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction, or termination of conflict,” but also requires an intervention in order to minimize affective conflicts and attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict (Rahim, 2002; Robbins, 1978).

CM is usually studied in interactions between individuals, groups and organizations, both at inter- and intra-sublevels (DeChurch and Marks, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Thomas, 1992). The majority of CM studies refer to interpersonal relations within the organizational context (DeChurch and Marks, 2001; Jehn, 1997; Kuhn and Poole, 2000; Rahim, 2002; van de Vliert et al., 1999; Wilmot and Hocker, 2010). On the city or regional level CM often relates to mediation between community groups (Kressel and Pruitt, 1989; Moore, 2014; Poitras, 2010; Purdy and Gray, 1994; Welton et al., 1992), which focuses on more approaches. However, adoption of an integrative system approach in destination performance and competitiveness analysis (Baggio, 2008; Machiavelli, 2001; McKercher, 1999) as well as in destination management and governance
(Pechlaner et al., 2009; Volgger and Pechlaner, 2015) makes possible to use organizational CM methods and to consider tourism-related conflicts with reference to conflicts between and within stakeholder groups which comprise the tourism system at the city level. It is necessary to exclude interpersonal dimension of conflict – although in practice, it is part of a destination because of its mesoeconomic analysis level. This leads to omitting affective conflicts and attracting attention only to the substantive or cognitive dimension (Rahim, 2002) and situational context (Speakman and Ryals, 2010).

Diagnosis and intervention are key and interrelated elements of CM (Rahim, 2002; Saaty, 1990). Diagnosis aims at recognizing a problem, e.g. the source(s) of conflict, measuring the nature of the relationships among parties and their willingness and capacity for negotiation intervention and establishing the logic of intervention, i.e. CM styles, procedures and tasks. There are several general approaches to and tools for recognizing problems causing conflicts, depending on the level of observations or interventions. Rahim (2002) identifies substantive and affective conflicts. Jehn (1997) points at differences regarding content of the task, process and relationships. Wilmot and Hocker (2010) specify conflicting interests, competing interests and shortage of resources. Deutsch (2006) distinguishes political, economic and social causes. All these approaches do not fully correspond to the destination context and multifaceted nature of UTH-related conflicts.

Therefore, the Circle of Conflict model proposed by Moore (2014) seems to be the most useful approach in that instance. The model has a universal nature, i.e. it can be adapted to every type of conflict situation and intervention level. Originally, it was created for the mediation scheme; however, the mediator relationship to disputed parties – and thus the legitimacy of mediators – can vary from independency through socially networking, to superiority. The model assumes that conflicts usually have many causes, which is very true for UTH-related problems. Thus, the most important thing is to identify them and adopt appropriate methods and tools of intervention. That is why the types of conflict sources proposed in the model are also of universal nature. They are grouped into five comprehensive and structured components (Moore, 2014): values, relationship, data, structural matters and interests. They form a circle to highlight their interrelationship and equality in importance. However, the graphic shape is not crucial, they can be presented in a table as well (see Table I). According to the author, parties need to recognize their own attitudes and relationships, then access to and interpretation of information. Next, interests of all parties and structural basis of conflicts should be identified. Then, parties should define the shared and opposite values. Nevertheless, convergences and discrepancies between all sources are very important.

Moreover, the Circle of Conflict model contributes to the next stage of CM that is intervention with two crucial aspects: strategy and subject of. The model proposes intervention tasks according to the identified conflict source types, as presented in the right column of Table I. And so, clarification of relationships, information and values differences should trigger an effective CM at the structure and interest level (Almeida et al., 2017). That is why the model can be used as a framework of CM process.

When the characteristics of UTH-related conflicts are taken into account, two general styles of handling conflict identified by (Rahim and Bonoma, 1979) are the most appropriate to handle them within the city tourism system context: integrating style and compromising style. Nevertheless, researchers agree that conflicts should be managed using more than one style (Kuhn and Poole, 2000; Rahim and Bonoma, 1979; Thomas, 1992) adjusted by conflict situation (Rahim, 2002; Thomas, 1992), nature of conflict (van de Vliert et al., 1999), characteristics of relationships involved and experience of previous conflicts (Speakman and Ryals, 2010). When residents protest against UTH and its effects, the complexity of issues raised and the multi-sectorial diversity of involved stakeholders weaken the communication and strengthen differences in interests and distrust between parties. In these conditions mediation as the CM tool is vital (Moore, 2014). Mediation is assistance in intervention in a conflict conducted by a third party who has little or no authoritative power to prescribe agreements or outcomes and to make decisions and is acceptable by all parties (Kressel and Pruitt, 1989; Moore, 2014; Poitras, 2010). Moore (2014) specifies the roles of mediators as helping the disputing parties in; taking the initiative to move the matter forward, starting or improving communications between or among them, recognizing that all parties are
affected by the conflict, establishing or enhancing more respectful and productive relationships, encouraging parties to cooperate rather than compete and recognizing or enhancing mutually acceptable agreements. Mediators usually propose and implement more effective problem-solving procedures, facilitate the whole process, educate the parties in terms of substantive issues of the conflict and sometimes take responsibility or blame for making unpopular decisions. Moreover, when disputing parties have inadequate power – which is an inherent part of tourism-related conflicts – mediators’ role is assisting the weaker parties (Ippolito and Pruitt, 1990).

Based on literature on mediations and CM (Moore, 2014; Phi et al., 2014; Welton et al., 1992), the mediator should: be independent, neutral or impartial (i.e. not being predetermined), biased, or fixed opinions or views regarding issues in question, have little or no authoritative power to make binding decisions to resolve the conflict, not be directly involved in the conflict, have personal skills, reputation and experience, have sufficient knowledge regarding the problem domain and have organizational, financial and time resources to perform the function.

Conflicts management as a destination governance responsibility

Analysis from the viewpoint of conflict activates entities responsible for developing tourism in cities. Two types of actors are key in this process: local government and DMO. The involvement of local government in tourism development has a multilateral character, starting from the

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<th>Table I</th>
<th>The circle of conflicts in urban tourism hypertrophy (UTH) context: causes and intervention tasks</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conflict causes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship conflicts</td>
<td>Fueled emotions and incompatible attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, lack of trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack or poor communication between parties</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving communication between conflicting parties by identifying information gaps and bridging them</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining the basic rules that must be followed by all the parties in order to enhancing the communication quality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking the initiative toward the development of positive perceptions and solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioning or delivering studies on the economic, social and cultural impact of tourism on the city, Tourist volumes and expenditures and tourism supply. Residents’ attitudes toward tourism, city image, tourist satisfaction, visitor profiles, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Data/information conflicts</td>
<td>Inaccurate information concerning UTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unequal access to different data by parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different ways of assessing and interpreting of data. contradiictory research results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying and promoting common and shared interests resulting from tourism development, explaining competing interests within tourism system</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposing consolidating solutions meeting the needs of all parties, proposing strategies for tourism planning and development</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legitimizing the presence of all parties being affected by the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acting as convener by initiating and formally presiding over the debate process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing a fair and mutual accepted decision-making procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning conflict into an opportunity for social change and thus identifying sustainable and long-term solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking on the responsibility for taking an unpopular but acceptable decision by the parties in order to mitigate or resolve conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting mutual understanding, acceptance and respect all parties’ points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking superior goals and shared interests for all parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Moore (2014)
provision of infrastructure, intervention to address market failure, protection of resources, financing promotional activities, bidding for major events as well as control tourism development and attempt to mitigate undesirable socio-economic and environmental impacts (Pike, 2004; Ruhanen, 2013). City governments and administration as urban policy makers and managers (Bačlija, 2013) also engage in tourism policy, in which case, in accordance with the concept of “good governance,” they share the responsibility for problems and decisions across DMOs and other non-governmental agencies (Dredge and Jenkins, 2007). Moreover, their involvement stems from the need of incorporating destination management into urban management (Pearce, 2015).

The roots and a predominant role of DMO are marketing the destination (Pike, 2004; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Wang, 2008) which have developed in the area of destination branding (Pike and Page, 2014). A range of DMOs’ responsibilities quickly widened as they became professionalized. In operational aspect, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) set the DMOs’ goal as fostering sustained destination competitiveness and extended their role to include enhancement of visitor experience, market information, visitor management and incentives for investors as well as developing human resources, stewardship of ecological, social and cultural resources, crisis management and taking the leadership in the destination.

Besides two typical areas of DMO responsibilities like destination marketing and monitoring service quality standards, Pike (2004) introduces two more: industry coordination and enhancing community relations. Dredge and Jenkins (2007) stress their role in tourism planning. Among the nine strategic roles of DMOs specified by Wang (2008), three are significant because they increase pressure on non-market responsibility of DMOs toward destination community: convener, facilitator and liaison of community tourism activities, advocate of the tourism industry and partner and team builder. Morrison’s (2013) comprehensive list of DMO’s roles points to, among their market responsibilities, the need of measuring attitudes toward tourism and gathering community suggestions. This is associated with such tasks as leading in setting the agenda for tourism and coordinating all stakeholders’ efforts toward achieving it, involving local community leaders and residents in tourism and monitoring resident attitudes toward tourism and fostering cooperation among governmental, non-governmental agencies and the private sector.

Few researchers analyze CM in a destination governance context. Dredge and Jenkins (2007) study CM as a distinct approach of destination planning and management. According to them, CM should be implemented separately from crisis-response planning and policy along with communicative planning and policy, aimed at enabling and promoting the collaboration and joint actions in destination. In the authors’ view, CM is needed to mitigate the conflicts between tourism and other resource-based activities. Other researchers (Blackman et al., 2011; Paraskevas et al., 2013; Pike, 2004; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003) see domestic conflicts within a framework of crisis management, without identifying the tools dedicated to them. However, Blackman et al. (2011) state that DMOs play a crucial role in facilitating crisis management as they should transfer, translate and transform the knowledge to all stakeholders affected by crisis. Chausson (2015) and Gravari-Barbas and Jaccou (2016), who describe the activities of public administration and local associations toward mitigating the conflicts relating the development of tourism and nightlife in Lyon and Paris, consider the term “conflict management” in a general meaning. Little research presents a detailed CM framework. The studies of conflict resolution during developing a tourism strategy by Jamal and Getz (1999) and of conflict and consensus in relational interactions in event project networks by Larson and Wikstrom (2001) can be seen as one of the first analyses of CM in tourism planning. Dredge (2010) discusses mediation in tourism-related conflicts from the viewpoint of government intervention. Finally, there are Almeida et al. (2017), who refer conflict analysis (adapting the Circle of Conflict model) to spatial planning for tourism in Troia-Melides Coast (Portugal).

When discussing DMOs’ predispositions for managing conflicts caused by UTH, it is crucial to stress objective limitations and shortcomings (Page and Hall, 2003; Pike, 2004; Pike and Page, 2014): organizational weakness and continued necessity to compete for finance with other organizations, limited budgets, limited control over the service chain, poor human resources, little control over the quality of the actual visitor experience relative to the promise made in
marketing communications, little control over the host community’s acceptance of, and attitude toward visitors, particularly the role of tourism and civic pride as a mechanism to create a tourism-friendly environment, little influence over development/maintenance of land use zoning, infrastructure and superstructure.

Based on the literature review that we conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn and the following literature gaps can be identified. Although UTH is not new, its intensity in a number of cities questions the effectiveness of current tourism development policies conducted by local authorities, which are sustainable only in theory. Still, few theories and frameworks have been developed and no preventative measures have been verified to minimize the UTH. However, social protests that result from the phenomenon trigger real action with regard to UTH and increased interest on the part of researchers. Although Coser (1956) and Yang et al. (2013) provide comprehensive analyses of functions and a process mechanism of social conflicts, they do not deliver frameworks for CM implementation in order to mitigate the effects of UTH and – more importantly – to verify the potential of main organizations functioning in urban destinations to manage this process. Out of all entities, DMOs are the most predisposed to acting as mediators in tourism-generated conflicts because of a wider and wider range of activities, yet they do have their drawbacks and weaknesses that limit their possibility of engaging in mediation in UTH disputes. However, such sophisticated and multi-sourced conflicts within the destination context have been largely overlooked in CM theories. That is why Moore’s (2014) universal Circle of Conflict model should be utilized to study the Krakow case. Third, tourism literature has rarely regarded CM as an area of destination governance. Nowadays in UTH-infected destinations for a framework needs to be created for analyzing the potential of DMOs to manage such conflicts and for proposing proper ways of intervention. Indicating emerging roles and responsibilities of key destination actors should be seen as preconditions of CM activities or wider scopes in which CM can be included.

Methodology

The aim of our research was to identify the degree to which key tourism governance actors were predisposed for UTH-related crisis management. Considering the conclusions based on literature review, the Circle of Conflict model (Moore, 2014) was adopted as a conceptual framework (Table II). Basing on literature on DMOs’ roles and activities (Morrison, 2013;
Pike, 2004; Pike and Page, 2014; Wang, 2008) as well as mediator’s tasks (Moore, 2014), it was assumed that the predispositions stem from an entity’s knowledge of how a given conflict develops, its previous activities aiming at managing the UTH-related conflicts and its own assessment of the ability to lead CM process. Responsibilities concerning crisis management stem from the role that a given entity plays in the tourism system, yet it needs to be borne in mind that nobody can be forced to take on the role of mediator. It largely depends on their self-evaluation of their predispositions and a sense of responsibility for how conflict develops further. UTH was the context, rather than the subject of research. Research concentrated on the entities predisposed to taking on the role of mediator in CM regardless of what role they played in the conflict.

The study is largely in line with interpretive tradition of qualitative research (Gephart, 2004). We attempted to report on complex and dynamic social conflicts induced by UTH on the basis of informants’ perceptions rather than objective reality – impossible to clarify in such an instance – which led them to undertake actions to manage these conflicts. However, we also used variables, which are characteristic of postpositivism research tradition (Gephart, 2004) to verify the hypothesis based on literature review that DMOs were most predisposed but not fully prepared to manage the UTH-related conflicts.

Our study used a single case-based approach (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), which let a researcher explain and emphasize the rich context of the studied phenomenon, create analytical generalization and even provoke new ideas within destination governance research area or provide suggestions for further research (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Miles et al., 1994; Siggelkow, 2007). We chose Krakow as a destination study because the city fulfilled the criteria of sample selection for qualitative research listed by Miles et al. (1994). Nevertheless, Krakow is the only Polish city where UTH-induced conflict is a manifested one.

To gather data, we collected information from documents, local press and electronic media and – most importantly – interviews. The structured interview method (Yin, 1994, p. 85) was used because the subject was complex and needed in-depth diagnosis. The researchers had the instruction so they could follow the logic of questions. The interviews were conducted with representatives (managing directors or public officials) of key entities (public, private and non-profit) engaged in destination governance and UTH-related conflict. They were selected purposefully as the researchers had a detailed knowledge about the structure of tourism governance in Krakow and the dynamic situation of UTH. In Poland, destination governance in cities is based on city administration units and tourist organizations operating on two territorial levels: mandatory regional tourist organizations acting in the wider province area and optional local tourist organizations (Zmysłony, 2014). In Kraków, we can observe the activity on part of the city administration and the regional tourist organization, whereby a local tourist organization does not exist in practice. Moreover, the sample was developed using the snowball technique (Dragan and Isaic-Maniu, 2013; Noy, 2008) as the first informants were asked to indicate other potential key entities. Due to the fact that the studied entities were the collective bodies, they were represented by at least one informant. Eventually, ten informants represented six entities: local chamber of tourism (CT), the most active resident social movement (RSM), Department of Promotion and Tourism in Municipality of Kraków as a city tourism administration (CTA), the Commission of Promotion and Tourism in Kraków City Council as a policy maker body (CC), Malopolska Regional Tourist Organization (RTO) and a destination service provider acting as Kraków’s “tourist brand ambassador” (DSP).

In order to draw informants’ attention to the topic of conflicts, rather than UTH itself, the interviews comprised 13 structured questions, mostly open, but also rating questions (with a five-grade scale, where 1 meant the lowest and 5 meant the greatest significance or impact of the assessed issue) and forced choice questions, always with an opportunity to add comments (see Table II). The informants were asked to assess the intensity of occurrence of conflict sources grouped within the categories detailed by Moore (2014). Accordingly, informants’ predispositions to fulfilling the role of mediator and the crisis manager were assessed, based on tasks shown in Table I. Finally, self-assessment of predispositions was proposed, referring to informants’ real action and assessments of their own resources classified as autonomy (reliability as an impartial partner and the lack of authoritative or formal power), reputation (authority coming from
knowledge of the causes and nature of conflict, experience in tourism management, mediation and CM skills, staff quality) and objective resources (organizational, financial, time).

The research was carried out in March and April 2018. On average, one interview lasted 38 min with the longest lasting 52 min and the shortest 21 min. Results were collated and then descriptive and substantive content analysis was conducted. Because of the variables used, the quotes had auxiliary function. Given the low number of interviews, the use of advanced methods of data analysis appeared to be unjustified as the purpose was to create analytical generalization.

The study site: UTH in Kraków

Kraków is Poland’s second most numerous city (0.75m inhabitants). As a complex of historical and heritage importance recognized internationally since 1978 (UNESCO World Heritage List, 2018), it is also Poland’s most visited city. It recorded 12.9m visitors, out of whom 9.1m were tourists and 30.8 percent were foreigners (Krakow City Hall, 2017a). The development of the city, as well as its tourism function, is related to fast developing transport accessibility and connectivity (international airport with numerous low-cost airlines connections, railway connections, concentration of main road routes around Krakow).

According to official documents (Krakow City Hall, 2017b), the medieval Main Square and surrounding quarters of tenement houses designated by the Planty greenery (in the place of former city fortifications) have still played the role of the city center. Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, this monocentric character of Krakow was maintained by the Jagiellonian University as well as cultural and administrative institutions located in the historic center. In recent years the central area has been markedly offloaded because of locations of new significant and iconic building and institutions such as the opera house, university campus, congress venue. Current documents assume the need to create multifunctional public spaces in the downtown areas.

The Old Town Quarter is a vehicle of identity for the inhabitants of the city and has a decisive impact on the city’s image. It is a symbolically saturated space that is crucial to the Polish national identity. Since the 1960s, the area has been constantly depopulated with the process accelerating after the 1990s political-economic transformations. Currently (2017), it is inhabited by 3,095 permanent residents (authors’ calculations based on Krakow City Hall data). Among the temporary residents, there is a visible share of students and also clergy living in ten monasteries located there.

The area amounts to only 0.29 percent of the city (88.67 ha). At the same time, this is where tourism traffic is the most concentrated (Krakow City Hall, 2017a). Through free-market processes, the area has been subject to the most advanced touristification, including tourist gentrification, both commercial and residential (Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2017; Kruczek, 2018). Already in 2008, nearly 40 percent of all the types of official tourism accommodation was located in the zone up to 1 km from the central point, i.e. the Cloth Hall on Main Square, which covers almost the entire Old Town Quarter, while in the zone up to 2 km, 57 percent of hotels, 92 percent hostels, 65 percent of guest rooms and 93 percent of apartments were operated (Mika, 2011). Currently, apart from the gradual increase in the registered accommodation base (a total of 4,392 beds in 2017) in the Old Town Quarter, there has been a sharp increase in the number of short-term rental housing units since 2012, offered especially through the Airbnb. com platform (53 percent), and managed by professional hosts (www.airdna.co, accessed October 16, 2018).

It was 2011 when Mika (2011) identified conflict situations related to tourism by stressing the multifunctional nature of the Old Town and the ensuing differences in the way it is used, especially conflict between the tourist and residential functions, very high tourist volumes during the season, contradictions between various forms of tourist traffic, exceeding the tourist capacity of some attractions. Nevertheless, still in 2014 “Tourism development strategy 2014–2020” provided for “the need for sustainable development action, including the preservation of the city’s cultural identity and inhabitant interests,” yet proposed that
“tourist products be developed by adapting to the needs and travel means of the contemporary tourist” (Krakow City Hall, 2014, p. 14). Excessive sensitivity to tourist demand is explained by, among others, several years of lack of response of city authorities to the dynamically developing short-term rental and amenities for low-budget entertainment tourism. While the former issue is relatively new and has been commented upon mainly by academics (e.g. Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2017; Kruczek, 2018) and urban activists since 2012, the latter has been an unresolved, growing social conflict, discussed both within the scientific agenda (e.g. Thurnell-Read, 2012; Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2017), official urban documents and growing media debate (Mazur, 2015; Drabik, 2017; Kursa, 2018a; b; Tymczak, 2018). The issue is connected with a debate on the transformations of the historical part of Krakow resulting from tourism growth as well as the dynamically developing exogenous recreational function (Faracik et al., 2015), especially the nightlife addressed to a wide range of Krakow city users, including tourists, dwellers and students (Murzyn-Kupisz and Szmytkowska, 2015).

These problems triggered some reactions of city administration. In 2010, the cultural park was established (Krakow City Hall, 2010) to protect and manage the sensitive and unique urban fabric. It made it possible to clear the public space of large-format ads, signs, commercial information, etc. (see Brainka et al., 2016). However, the 2018 regulations have been contested by some private stakeholders. Soft tools have also been developed. For example, the international project “Historical Cities 3.0,” the aim of which is to discuss problems related to tourism, experiences and solutions used in tourist-historic cities (Walas et al., 2018).

Apart from the badly perceived entertainment/party and alcohol tourism, the fundamental problem stems from competition for public space: mainly taken-up parking spaces and congestion, taking up public space by electric vehicles for tourists, use of public space by café and restaurant tables (Luchter, 2014). Local media has stressed both the huge role that tourism plays in the city’s budget, i.e. 8 percent in Krakow’s GDP in 2017 (Krakow City Hall, 2018) and the associated costs, i.e. seasonal and low wages, displacement of long-term residents out of the center of their city (Drabik, 2017), rising residents’ negative attitude toward tourists and further tourism development (Kursa, 2018a).

The spatial range of conflicts has also been increased recently. That is why the city authorities indicate “[r]estricting the negative impact of mass tourist traffic on the functioning of the City and the quality of life of the residents” as one of the major modern development challenges (Krakow City Hall, 2017b). Therefore, the key tourism-related actions in the city’s new development strategy (Krakow City Hall, 2017b) are: first, restricting the unfavorable consequences of mass tourist traffic, in particular the depopulation of the Old Town, the historic Jewish Kazimierz Quarter and Stare Podgorze-Zablocie Quarter; second, assessing and taking into account the mass tourist traffic in the process of planning undertakings and strategic programs by the City; third, implementing actions intended to deglomerate tourist traffic outside the strict city center; and fourth, undertaking activities intended to gain a greater acceptance of the residents for mass tourist traffic.

All the above changes constitute the sense of UTH in its initial phase. No comprehensive and in-depth research and, on the other hand, the belief that UTH is becoming an important urban issue in Krakow prompted the authors to ask how development of tourism was understood by key actors and who should deal with UTH-related protests.

Results

All informants noticed the problem of UTH in Kraków, yet three of them, including RTO, assessed its intensity as significant, public sector representatives as average and CT as low. According to four interviewees, UTH-generated conflicts were so advanced that they had turned into manifested disputes. However, RTO and CTA claimed that this was not so visible yet:

Tourist conflicts are not visible in Kraków yet, but experts and decision-makers that develop tourism see symptoms of conflict for sure. Growing conflicts of interests need to be addressed soon. (CTA)

Recently tourist traffic has concentrated excessively in the centre of Krakow, which is also visible in marketing research results. Its scale cannot yet be defined. (RTO)
The complexity of the subject of the conflict was assessed as high; levels of emotions, imbalance between parties and their ability to solve conflict as average; and duration of conflict, number of participating parties and advancement of its procedures as low.

There were no significant differences in how informants identified the functional sources of UTH-related conflict. Informants mainly stressed the differences in values (mean value 4.44 on a five-point scale, where 1 meant the lowest and 5 meant the greatest impact). Almost all informants attached the most significance to different aims and expectations of stakeholders.

Interest conflicts, especially inconsistent and competing interests of parties to the conflict and their material causes, turned out to be another category of conflict source with the most informants (4.06). As the CC representative claimed:

> There are more and more signals that tourism is a nuisance, and thus an institution needs to be created to solve or minimize the development problems. This is a conflict of interests and how entrepreneurs and residents see the city development. Residents are more and more frustrated, they come to district councils, city council, officials, municipal guards, but no one is able to help them, because everyone has only small impact on how the city functions. (CC)

Data conflict was assessed as the third influential category of sources of conflict (3.72). The most informants paid attention to a high number of different interpretations of information by parties to the conflict and incorrect information on its subject.

Both informants responsible for direct destination governance assessed their mediation predispositions as average (Table III). The average value of rates amounted to 3.21 for RTO and 3.53 for CTA. DSP (4.11) and CC (4.00) assigned higher scores to their predispositions, while lower scores were provided by two entities that were the most engaged in conflict: CT (3.05) and RSM (2.68). Going into detail, all informants gave their predispositions a higher value assessing the ability to resolve disputes concerning values and interests than when it came to other tasks. RTO appreciated its own skills of bridging information gaps (3.67) and assigned lower ranks to its predisposition to manage relationship and structural issues:

> We see our responsibility in answering all inquiries and providing reliable information about the seriousness of the problem. We do not see ourselves as the ones to initiate the debates or negotiations. We will not take responsibility for unpopular decisions leading to mitigating conflict. (RTO)

The structure of self-assessment relating to CTA’s own predispositions was more balanced and oscillated around the rate of 3.5, yet a higher score was given to CM possibilities and relationship issues were assigned a lower rank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of conflict sources</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>All categories (mean value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predispositions to leading the conflict management process (mean value)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSM</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict management performance (mean value)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
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<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSM</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: RTO, Malopolska Regional Tourist Organization; CTA, City Tourism Administration, Department of Promotion and Tourism in Municipality of Krakow; CC, Commission of Promotion and Tourism, Krakow City Council; CT, Krakow Chamber of Tourism; RSM, resident social movement; DSP, destination service provider
Both CTA and RTO declared that they used their previously assessed predispositions in practice within five highlighted categories, with a mean rate of 3.89 and 3.84, respectively (Table III). CTA assigned a relatively high rate (4.0) to its commitment in almost every category. In details, the informants claim:

We are the only institution that finances research into the way in which tourism impacts the city’s development, we are also going to measure the attitude of residents towards tourists. These are global actions. As an administration we could not supply conflicting parties with detailed information. However, we do not feel like taking a substantive initiative to solve or mitigate the conflict, or work out a procedure of decision-making. (CTA)

RTO evaluated the highest performance classified as data conflict tasks (4.67), relatively high the activities in managing value and interest conflicts (4.0), whereas an average score was given to managing relationship and structural conflicts:

Since 2003, we have been conducting research on tourism flows in the city, which is the starting point to recognize the causes and dimensions of conflicts related to the development of tourism. This is our main role in tourism system. Because of our position, we tried to encourage stakeholders to see and understand different points of view of the problem. We also tried to define common values and goals. But in fact, we’re just starting to get involved. (RTO)

Nevertheless, RTO did not officially intervene in conflict, whereas the other informants declared their commitment once they noticed its first symptoms. The other three entities rated their intervention performance as moderate and low (CC 3.5, DSP 2.95, CT 2.84, RSM 1.47) with CT declaring their previous efforts to identify common areas of action as part of value and interest conflicts:

We have already organized a few debates with residents about the problems of tourism development, mainly regarding transport and Airbnb. They were quite stormy. We feel that we are part of this issue and we must do something, although we do not feel that Krakow did not have a problem with excessive tourism development. (CT)

Again, the assessment of its own resources in the context of managing the conflict (Table IV) was the highest while interviewing CTA (mean value 3.78) and RTO (3.67). The former ranked its reputation the highest (4.0) followed by organizational, financial and time resources (3.67) with autonomy having the lowest score. RTO indicated autonomy as its strength (4.5) and objective resources as weaknesses (2.67):

We are credible as a body which should represent all tourism stakeholders. We have done a lot of tourism projects so we have gained a plenty of experience and knowledge. However, it is all about money and formal competences, which we do not have much of. (RTO)

When asked about the entity that is the most predisposed to fulfill the role of leading manager/ mediator in conflict, informants provided CTA (four mentions together with that of RTO) and CT (two mentions, including that of CTA).

Findings and discussion

This study starts discussion on using the crisis management approach to mitigate the negative outcomes of UTH. The results confirm that UTH in Kraków led to conflict with intensity and nature of manifest dispute that meet the conditions for mediation intervention (Kressel and Pruitt, 1989;
Moore, 2014). Moreover, there is a conflict of interests and communication problems between parties. It was also found that there was a limited possibility of resolving conflict together because of no appropriate procedures in place or facilitators of joint actions.

Using the Circle of Conflict model made it possible to give conflict a structured framework, focusing stakeholders’ attention on functional sources of misunderstandings rather than the complex nature of UTH that is slow to respond to intervention. Thus, the difference of views was replaced with agreement as to the understanding of the nature of conflict which forms the basis for quick and, more importantly, common actions with a view to mitigating the negative outcomes of the problem, according to enhanced organizational (systemic in destinations) learning effect of CM (Rahim, 2002). This could be the way to sustainability of the destination system.

The results confirmed that DMO is best placed to manage conflict fully, although in Kraków, it functions on a regional rather than destination level. Yet this conclusion is not obvious and unambiguous and needs stronger justification. The RTO’s assessment of its own predisposition to fulfill CM/mediation tasks was lower compared to that of three other informants, yet the respondent bias and reflexivity effect (Yin, 1994) must be considered. Thus, these answers can be compared to the declared intensity of action conducted – using the technique similar to importance-performance analysis (Martilla and James, 1977) – and self-assessment of resources owned. Only for two entities, RTO and CTA, the global mean assessment of performed CM tasks was higher than the declared predisposition (+0.63 and +0.37, respectively), which means that they undertook mediation action because of their functions in the tourism system. In all categories of tasks, the juxtaposition of activities and declarations was positive, yet for the RTO the biggest difference was noted for data conflicts (+1.0) and structural conflicts (+0.67), and as far as the CTA was concerned – for relationship conflicts (+0.67).

Referring both entities’ assessment of their own predispositions in relation to their resources – which, again, was positive as opposed to that of other informants – also strengthens them as organizations that manage the conflict on destination level. Their own rating of autonomy and knowledge-based reputation, staff qualifications and interorganizational skills that was higher than that provided for objective resources is in line with both responsibilities of contemporary DMOs in the area of industry coordinating, stakeholder/community relations, providing information, facilitating and liaising joint activities (Morrison, 2013; Pike, 2004; Wang, 2011), as well as their recognized weaknesses and limitations (Page and Hall, 2003; Pike, 2004; Pike and Page, 2014). The RTO’s low score of its activities in Kraków referring to the initiator and leader of the CM process stems from the fact that this role is just entering the ever-widened canon of DMO tasks and from a wider spatial range of its performance, which means that a possible involvement in mediation in Kraków might neglect other areas of activities. All these factors may decrease a score of RTO’s own predispositions. Paradoxically, this may confirm even further that DMOs could play a key role in CM as determined by Dredge and Jenkins (2007).

Although the results confirmed the high predispositions to manage conflict in Kraków on part of CTA, one must consider the organizational solutions mentioned earlier with reference to tourism governance in Kraków that strengthen their role in tourism planning and administration, which is in line with their role as described by Dredge and Jenkins (2007) and Ruhanen (2013), but they limit their activities as mediators because of direct involvement in conflict, the bureaucratic style of managing tasks and authoritative power (Kressel and Pruitt, 1989; Moore, 2014).

DMOs’ CM performance fulfills the attributes of social network mediators type (Moore, 2014) as they are rooted in tourism system and are able to draw on peer pressure to enforce agreements among stakeholders, which fosters sustained destination competitiveness. However, this study also identified high mediation predispositions of DSP who acts as a Kraków ambassador and is not directly involved in the local tourism supply chain. If a DMO cannot assume the role of mediator, this may necessitate an independent mediator.

Conclusions

The study contributes to the scientific discussion on overtourism by proposing an alternative approach to understand the problem and to mitigate the issue. It recognizes it as both a cause
and a field of potential and real conflicts within towns and cities. Their intensity in a number of cities questions the effectiveness of current urban policies with reference to tourism development, which are sustainable only in theory. The existence of UTH itself does not usually directly increase the responsibility and decisions made by local authorities and DMOs to mitigate its outcomes. The sphere is marginalized, which is confirmed by the fact that no concepts have been developed and no preventative measures have been verified in practice so far. These are social protests against tourism which trigger real action with regard to UTH and increased interest on the part of researchers.

The literature suggests that it is challenging and time consuming to develop an effective tool for mitigating the effects of UTH, yet there is a strong pressure for definitive action. We suggest applying the CM approach as a framework for activities aiming at mitigating the outcomes of UTH and as a tool for verifying who should bring the parties to the table and manage the whole process. Thus, the paper brings the following contributions.

First, it discusses the conditions of applying CM theory within the destination context. The theoretic basis of this is the system approach according to which it is possible to adopt the methods and strategies for CM to handle UTH-related conflicts. The nature and dynamics of conflicts related to UTH gives rise to the need for mediation. Thus, the paper explores the existing literature to discuss the DMOs’ predispositions to fulfilling the conflict manager or mediator role.

Second, this study implements and verifies Moore’s (2014) Circle of Conflicts as a tool for diagnosing the sources of conflicts related to UTH and verifying the predispositions of key actors in urban tourism systems for managing the mediation process within this conflict. The tasks proposed in the model that are adapted to given sources of conflict form a road map for CM and enable verifying its own score of key actors against action that they are undertaking to manage conflict. If assessment of these entities’ resources is added, it is possible to determine the entity that is best placed for that role.

Third and the most important, the study concludes that DMO is the most appropriate entity to deal with UTH using the CM approach. The key factors of how DMO is committed to undertaking CM leadership include their abilities to diagnose causes and amount of conflict, and assess their own mediation predispositions. Therefore, we state that the range of responsibilities and roles of the contemporary DMOs should be completed with mediating and CM as the permanent task during tourism hypertrophy. Moreover, CM should be considered as a tool and dimension of the contemporary destination governance approach. CM can also be helpful in incorporating visitors to the set of urban stakeholders addressed by urban management as stated by Pearce (2015), as it delivers methods of coordinating the needs of citizens, investors and visitors.

The study also supports the urban tourism managers by suggesting the tool of diagnosis and intervention in UTH-induced conflicts. It is necessary to identify the sources of conflicts to avoid the mistakes of dealing with wrong problems and filling the right gaps in differences between stakeholders related to values, interests, information, relationships and structures. Thus, CM approach fosters a shift from the “how to plan for sustainable tourism” orientation to the “how to tourism should be planned and managed to contribute to sustainable communities and societies” approach, as postulated by Jenkins et al. (2011, p. 28).

The study displays limitations related to the methodology. First, a single case study approach has a limited potential for generalization, and also limited readability (Yin, 1994). Moreover, the contextual character of the research as well as specific destination governance structure in Kraków blurred the picture of DMOs predispositions to leading the CM process. Second, interpretive quality research and interview technique are exposed to response bias augmented by subjectivity of self-assessment questions without using reputation methods. Third, the limited number of informants may expose the research to claims that the research process is not closed. The authors are aware of these limitations, notwithstanding, the nature of the local conflict did not allow them to conduct full research.

Thus, the study suggests three directions for further research. The first one should focus on the changing role of DMOs in the conditions of UTH-related crises. Especially, methods and tools of
crisis management and mediations techniques in the context of destination governance should be analyzed further. The second direction concerns enhancing methodology of verification of DMO’s predispositions to manage the conflict process related to UTH. In the Krakow case other informants like individual entrepreneurs, other resident associations and tourism experts could be interviewed as well as the content analysis could be elaborated on. Similar studies should be conducted in other UTH-infected cities. The third deals with improving the research method of utilizing the Circle of Conflict model as a tool of diagnosis and intervention in UTH-related conflicts. The legal actions conducted by administrative bodies of all levels are not enough as UTH causes long-term changes in cities and thus induce social conflicts which cannot be resolved by administrative solutions only.

References


**Further reading**


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A comparative study of outcome quality, perceived value, and loyalty in four-star and five-star hotels

Yousef Keshavarz, Yuhanis Abdul Aziz, Dariyoush Jamshidi and Zeinab Ansari

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to follow a comparative framework to investigate the effects of outcome quality on loyalty through the mediating role of perceived value in four-star hotels and five-star hotels.

Design/methodology/approach – Following a review of the literature, some hypotheses were formulated to examine the effects of outcome quality on attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention through the mediating role of perceived value. The data guiding the comparative analysis were collected from two groups of visitors staying either in four-star or five-star hotels. The sample included 356 international tourists who stayed overnight in four- or five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data.

Findings – Analyzing the data obtained helped to construct three models. In the first model, the effects of outcome quality on attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention through the mediating role of perceived value in both group of customers was analyzed. In the second model, the effects of outcome quality on behavioral intention through the mediating role of perceived value were compared across the two groups. In the third model, all dimensions of attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention were combined into one single variable called composite loyalty.

Originality/value – In the first model, the (in)direct effect of outcome quality on both of the dimensions of loyalty (attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention) was confirmed through perceived value as the mediating variable. The results of processing the second model showed that the impact of outcome quality on behavioral intention was greater in the four-star hotels clients, whereas the effect of perceived value on behavioral intention was greater in the five-star hotels visitors. The third model revealed that the (in)direct effect of outcome quality on composite loyalty through perceived value was greater in the four-star hotels clients than that in the five-star hotels clients.

Keywords Perceived value, Behavioural intention, Attitudinal loyalty, Outcome quality

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Hospitality services have become one of the major demands of tourists today, and increasing demand in this area has engendered severe competition in the hospitality industry (Choo and Aizzat, 2016). Hotel managers find it overriding to distinguish their services from those of their potential competitors. To accomplish this, such managers must have sufficient knowledge of and try to meet clients’ needs/wants by providing high-quality services (Wu and Ko, 2013). Clients, on a general basis, value premium services and are usually willing to pay for the comfort provided by four- and five-star hotels. High-quality services, then, represent one of clients’ priorities (Shahrl et al., 2015).

Several studies, however, have reported that the existing measurement scales (e.g. SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, LODGQUAL, LODGSERV and HISTOQUAL) fail to make a thorough assessment of hotel service quality in the tourism industry. These scales have only considered process quality attributes, ignoring the impact of service outcome (Wu and Ko, 2013). Such an outcome is thought to have a vital role in the development of service quality (see Caro and Garcia, 2008;
Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018), because it is regarded as a factor affecting customers’ perceived value (Wu and Liang, 2009) and loyalty (Pizam et al., 2016). Perceived value refers to a client’s subjective understanding of outcome quality depending on his/her emotive, cognitive and social concepts associated with a hotel (Walls, 2013).

Clients prefer to pay for a service/product which displays the best benefit-cost ratio (Jamshidi and Hussin, 2016a, b; Naumann, 1995). According to Pizam et al. (2016), the cost of keeping an existing customer is five times lower than that of attracting a new one. As Reichheld and Sasser (1990) argue, with a 2 percent increase of customer loyalty, costs would be reduced by 10 percent. In contrast, service quality, when poorly managed, can be an important factor in undermining clients’ loyalty to a hotel (Berezina et al., 2012). Wu and Ko (2013) suggest that hotel managers encounter problems in measuring and improving their customer-friendly service performance because of the lack of an integrative conceptual model and a good measurement scale.

Moreover, service quality itself is a variable dependent on contextual variations, because clients may have different expectations of services provided in five-star hotels compared with those in four-star hotels. An underdeveloped topic, which can shed light on this situation, is a comparison between four- and five-star hotels in terms of the effect of outcome quality on loyalty by considering the mediating role of perceived value. The present study, given this gap in the literature, tries to investigate the impact of outcome quality on loyalty in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, taking into account the mediating role of perceived value and comparing clients’ viewpoints.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theory of reasoned action

The present study relies on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975); TRA founds the theoretical basis behind the notion of loyalty as explored here. This theory postulates that the antecedent of the behavior is behavioral intention which is motivated by two factors: subjective norm and attitude toward the behavior. Attitude represents customer behavior, while subjective norm refers to a set of beliefs usually known as normative beliefs. TRA basically assumes that behavioral intentions are realized as actual behaviors if such behaviors are perceived to be volitional.

TRA has been widely investigated in different studies and contexts (Paul et al., 2016; Jamshidi and Hussin, 2018). Numerous scholars have tested and validated Fishbein and Ajzen’s model in different settings, such as food-tourists’ behaviors (Kim et al., 2011), fast-food restaurants (Bagozzi et al., 2000), accounting firms (Liker and Sindi, 1997) and health care (Montano and Taplin, 1991). Providing excellent predictability, TRA has been quite useful to forecast behavioral intentions and behaviors as far consumer behavior as is concerned (Paul et al., 2016). Intention is regarded as the best predictor of behavior (Lai and Hitchcock, 2017). An understanding and analysis of consumers’ attitudes can help marketers or managers in many ways (Kim et al., 2011).

TRA not only predicts consumers’ intentions/behaviors, but it also provides a relatively simple basis for identifying where and how to target consumers’ behavioral change patterns (Sheppard et al., 1988). TRA was selected this study to explore the relationship between the variables involved, because attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention arise from customers’ expectations of outcome quality and perceived value.

2.2 Outcome quality

Wuest (2001) argues that customers’ overall perception of service quality is shaped as a result of various experiences they have gained from a given service provided over a period of time. Gronroos (1984) classifies service quality into two categories: technical quality and functional quality. The technical aspect of service quality emphasizes what the customer usually receives from the service, whereas the functional aspect deals with the service delivery. Outcome quality represents technical quality, from the perspective of Gronroos’s model (Kang, 2006).
Sociability, valence and waiting time have been enumerated as three dimensions of outcome quality (Wu and Ko, 2013). Sociability is perceived as a positive social experience gained through social satisfaction and a sense of sharing this experience with other individuals involved in the same activity.

Valence denotes customers’ post-consumption evaluation, determining whether the service outcome is acceptable or not. Valence has been reported to have a major function in determining service outcome (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Ko and Pastore, 2005). Waiting time measures the time customers spend on waiting for a service. Waiting time for a service is often expressed as an exasperating experience by many customers in the service industry (Wu and Ko, 2013). Choi and Kim (2013), along with Liat and Abdul-Rashid (2011), found that outcome quality left a significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction.

2.3 Perceived value

Perceived value is considered to be one of the most important factors deciding business success and is measured to examine customer loyalty (Kim et al., 2011). Zeithaml (1988) contends that perceived value is “the customer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on the perception of what is received and what is given.” A customer’s perceived value and service quality are considerably interesting variables in studies dealing with hospitality (Joung et al., 2016; Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2016; Zeleti et al., 2016). Dodds (1991) believes that perceived value is a composite of perceived quality and perceived/monetary sacrifices.

The way the customer perceptually evaluates a particular product/service affects his/her purchasing decisions (as in selecting a service or brand over other choices at hand) (Lin, 2008). The relationships between quality, value, satisfaction and loyalty have also been explored (see Gallarza and Saura, 2006). Choi and Chu (2001) assume that success in the hospitality industry depends on customers’ perception of how valuable the services provided are.

2.4 Loyalty

Levy et al. (2016) propose that loyalty can serve as an indicator to evaluate a hotel’s success. Loyalty can have two components: the attitudinal and the behavioral (Dick and Basu, 1994; Keshavarz and Ali, 2015). In many studies attitudinal loyalty has been operationalized as the intention to recommend. The more visitors assign value to a service in their perceptions, the more likely it is for them to recommend the service to other potential customers such as friends and relatives (Chitty et al., 2007; Cronin et al., 2000). Rundle-Thiele (2005) explains that attitudinal loyalty is the customer’s tendency to buy a given brand. Behavioral intention, on the other hand, focuses on the history of the customer’s purchase (Vesel and Zabkar, 2009) and word-of-mouth (WOM) (Tanford, 2013). According to Reichheld and Sasser (1990), 60 percent of new customers are attracted by WOM.

Meanwhile, repurchase intention has been a widely used measure for behavioral loyalty; many studies have argued that intention and action are successive stages of behavior (Gursoy et al., 2014; Jamshidi et al., 2018; Tanford, 2013). Rauyruen and Miller (2007) define behavioral loyalty as customers’ willingness to repurchase a service/product and to maintain a relationship with the supplier. The composite perspective combines the attitudinal and behavioral measures of loyalty (Dimitriades, 2006; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007; Zins, 2001).

2.5 Model development

Based on the theoretical foundations, the literature reviewed, scale development procedures, the model was developed (see Figure 1). In this model, outcome quality, as the independent variable, is composed of some dimensions including valence, waiting time and sociability. Perceived value, as the as the mediator, includes three dimensions: emotive, cognitive and social self-concepts. Loyalty involves two dimensions: attitudinal loyalty with three sub-dimensions including emotional commitment, trust and switching costs; and behavioral intention with two sub-dimensions including revisit intention and WOM. TRA was used to frame the proposed model in this study.
According to TRA, customers’ attitudes represent their behaviors they may display with respect to a hotel, and these behaviors include WOM and revisit intention. Subjective norm refers to a set of beliefs about the hotel such as emotional commitment, trust and beliefs about the costs of switching the hotel. Because intention in TRA is the predictor of behavior, this study considered perceived value and outcome quality to be predictors of loyalty exhibited by international tourists who stayed in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur.

3. Research method

3.1 Questionnaire design and data collection

To confirm content validity in this study, the draft version of the questionnaire was evaluated twice by a group of professionals in Kuala Lumpur hotels and the Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Management, in Universiti Putra Malaysia. They also evaluated the context in which the measurable items were placed on the questionnaire to reduce the chance of the common cognitive bias. A pilot study was conducted with 30 guests at the beginning of July 2015 to ensure that ambiguous, vague and unfamiliar terms had not been included (Greener, 2008). According to Hair et al. (2007), the sample size for the pilot test could include four or five individuals and the largest number should not exceed 30 participants. The results of the pilot test demonstrated the required reliability to confirm the scale indicators used in the survey. Cronbach’s $\alpha$ values of all the variables were more than 0.70. Thus, all the variables were reliable.

3.2 The population and the sample

The accessible population included international tourists who stayed at least overnight in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In this study, six public places of interest suggested by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and Culture, Malaysia were randomly selected to collect the data from the international tourists. These landmarks were the Petronas Twin Towers, Aquaria, Jamek Mosque, Central Market, Putrajaya Mosque and Times Square Mall in Kuala Lumpur.

The participants were initially screened to ensure that they had stayed at Kuala Lumpur four- and five-star hotels services within the past four weeks. To collect the data from the international tourists, three questions were raised by the researchers as the screening questions: first, “are you an international tourist?” second, “have you stayed in a four- or five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur in the past four weeks?” and third, “are you interested in completing a questionnaire?” If a potential respondent gave an affirmative answer to all three questions, a copy of the main questionnaire would be handed over to him/her.

Figure 1 The conceptual model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome quality</th>
<th>Perceived value</th>
<th>Behavioral intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Valence</td>
<td>- Emotive</td>
<td>- WOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Waiting time</td>
<td>- Cognitive</td>
<td>- Revisit intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sociability</td>
<td>- Social/self concept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to TRA, customers’ attitudes represent their behaviors they may display with respect to a hotel, and these behaviors include WOM and revisit intention. Subjective norm refers to a set of beliefs about the hotel such as emotional commitment, trust and beliefs about the costs of switching the hotel. Because intention in TRA is the predictor of behavior, this study considered perceived value and outcome quality to be predictors of loyalty exhibited by international tourists who stayed in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur.
As a rule of thumb, at least five participants per parameter would be needed for data collection (see Bollen, 1989), and a total of 200 participants (critical sample size) would be normally required for the structural equation modeling analysis using maximum likelihood estimation (Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, because there were 40 items measuring the variables, a ten participant per parameter ratio would require at least 400 respondents, who were ultimately selected as the sample. A total of 380 copies of completed questionnaires were collected, out of which only 356 questionnaires were valid for the final analysis.

3.3 Background information of the respondents

Table I illustrates the demographic information of the respondents. The sample comprised 180 males (50.6 percent) and 176 females (49.4 percent); the majority of the respondents (31.7 percent) were aged 25–34. Most of the respondents (36.8 percent) were from Asian countries. The respondents with an annual income below $20,000 shaped 28.4 percent of the sample, followed by those who annually made $20,001–$40,000 (23.3 percent). The majority of the respondents (30.1 percent) held a Bachelor’s Degree and stayed in five-star hotels. More than 50 percent of the respondents had never visited their hotels before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I</th>
<th>Demographic characteristics of the respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
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<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and more</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Asian countries</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East countries</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European countries</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,001–$40,000</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001–$60,000</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001–$80,000</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001–$100,000</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1,000,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
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<td>High School Degree</td>
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<td>Junior College Graduate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking the hotel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 star</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 star</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–10 times</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More 10 times</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Scale purification

In the first step of the analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the measurement model and to specify the relationships between the observed variables with the underlying latent variables. Through the CFA which was processed in AMOS 21.0., each latent variable included in the measurement model was tested separately and then the overall measurement model was evaluated. Table II shows the reliability, validity and the correlation matrix of the eight dimensions. The values of Cronbach’s $\alpha$, average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR) were greater than 0.7, 0.5 and 0.7, respectively. These results indicated that the research model had a good reliability and convergent validity.

Because the first question of the emotional commitment section showed a value was less than 0.60, it was omitted. Moreover, according to the results of the modification indices (MI), the fifth indicator of trust was deleted because of the highest MI between this item and the others. The indices revealed that the data fit the model appropriately ($\chi^2$/df = 2.50, CFI = 0.923 and RMSEA = 0.065). Hair et al.’s (2007) pattern was used to obtain convergent validity as the size of the standardized factor loading of all the left items was more than 0.6, and the AVE values were equal or more than 0.5. Moreover, internal consistency was confirmed, as the CR values for all the variables were more than 0.7, and the AVE for all the latent constructs was more than the square of the correlation between the constructs. Therefore, discriminate validity was achieved, as well.

3.4.1 Assessment of the structural model. The second step of this study involved developing an appropriate method for analyzing the effects of the outcome quality model (with 3 constructs and 11 indicators) for four- and five-star hotels. A moderator model was used to investigate the customers’ perceptions of outcome quality in four-star hotels in comparison with five-star hotels, while evaluating the effect of such perceptions on perceived value, attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention. To do this, categorical variables had to be dummy-coded, the variables had to be centered and the interaction effects had to be manually created. In the full model in this study, outcome quality was considered to be an independent variable, while perceived value was a mediating variable. Meanwhile attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention were the dependent variables. The constructed model is schematized in Figure 2.

It can be concluded that from the perspective of the international tourists, outcome quality in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur had a significant effect on perceived value (0.52), attitudinal loyalty (0.35) and behavioral intention (0.30). Furthermore, perceived value also showed a significant impact on attitudinal loyalty (0.48) and behavioral intention (0.51).

Moreover, because the comprehensive mediating model of the Akaike information criterion (AIC) was smaller (1,814.696 vs 1,894.893) and the Parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI) was larger (0.809 vs 0.806) compared with the indirect model, it was possible to examine the comprehensive mediating model. Therefore, perceived value also played a mediating role in the effect of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II</th>
<th>Means, standard deviations, $\alpha$, CR, AVE and correlation matrix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Val</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wit</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Soc</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emo</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cogn</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SSC</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emc</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tru</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. S.co</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. WOM</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. R.int</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: OQ, outcome quality; P.V, perceived value; Val, valence; Wit, waiting time; Soc, sociability; Emo, emotive; Cogn, cognitive; SSC, social/self-concept; Emc, emotional commitment; Tru, trust; S.co, switching costs; WOM, word-of-mouth; R.int, revisit intention; M, mean; SD, standard deviation; $\alpha$, Cronbach’s $\alpha$; CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted. Values at the diagonal line are squared root of AVE.
In the comprehensive model, compared with the standard $\beta$ model, the impact of outcome quality on attitudinal loyalty was reduced from 0.66 to 0.36, and the standard $\beta$ of the impact of outcome quality on behavioral intention dropped from 0.73 to 0.38; yet the $p$-values of both equations remained unchanged. As a result, the mediating role of perceived value was partial.

As the major objective of this study was to compare these effects in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, the new model was designed based on a classification of the information obtained. According to the model designed, the variance of attitudinal loyalty was negative for both groups of four-stars and five-stars hotels, and it was not possible to examine the model with respect to the comparison of international tourists’ viewpoints on the effects of outcome quality and perceived value on attitudinal loyalty. Hence, two new models were designed.

3.4.2 The first model. In the first model, only behavioral intention was considered to be the dependent variable, which included two dimensions: WOM and revisit intention. Figure 3 illustrates the aforementioned impacts among the international tourists in four-star hotels.
while Figure 4 depicts the international tourists’ perception of the impact of outcome quality and perceived value on behavioral intentions in five-star hotels. The fitting indices of both models indicated that both of the models had a high fit (Table III).

The distance between $\chi^2$ in the limited and unlimited model in relation to the perception of the international tourists’ stay in Kuala Lumpur’s four- and five-star hotels about the impact of outcome quality and perceived value on behavioral intention was 98.196, which was a value beyond the standard threshold of 3.84. Therefore, the impact of four-star and five-star hotels on the impact of outcome quality and perceived value on behavioral intention was significant. Therefore, the impact of each of the variables in the four-star and five-star hotels should be separately probed into.

Based on the information in Table IV, the effect of outcome quality on perceived value in both the four-star and five-star hotels was confirmed ($p$-value < 0.001), although the effect was different in both groups. More specifically, the effect of outcome quality on perceived value in four-star hotels was 0.662, while the same effect on the five-star hotels was 0.443. Therefore, it can be inferred from the obtained information that the international tourists who stayed in four-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur assigned more value to the services offered at these hotels, compared to the value assigned by tourists staying in five-star hotels. This implied that although the effect of outcome quality on behavioral intention was confirmed in both groups of hotels guests, this impact in the
Figure 4: Structural model of outcome quality toward behavioral intention in five-star hotels

Notes: OQ, outcome quality; P.V, perceived value; Val, valence; Wit, waiting time; Soc, sociability; Emo, emotive; Cogn, cognitive; SSC, social/self-concept; B.int, behavioral intention; wom, word of mouth; R.int, revisit intention. $\chi^2$ (df) = 1,266.043 (684); $p$-value ($\geq 0.05$) = 0.000; Relative $\chi^2$ ($\leq 5$) = 1.851; GFI ($\geq 0.9$) = 0.809; CFI ($\geq 0.9$) = 0.939; IFI ($\geq 0.9$) = 0.939; RMSEA ($\leq 0.08$) = 0.049

Table III: $\chi^2$ value in two models for the first model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limit model</td>
<td>1,167.847</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimit model</td>
<td>1,266.043</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>98.196</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV: Standardized regression coefficient in the structural model in the first model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Four-star model</th>
<th>Five-star model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome quality $\rightarrow$ perceived value</td>
<td>0.662***</td>
<td>0.443***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome quality $\rightarrow$ behavioral intention</td>
<td>0.375***</td>
<td>0.271***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value $\rightarrow$ behavioral intention</td>
<td>0.585***</td>
<td>0.632***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ***$p < 0.001$
four-star hotels clients group was more than that in the five-star hotels clients (0.375 in four-stars hotels vs 0.271 in five-star ones). However, the effect of perceived value on behavioral intention in five-star hotels was more than that in four-star hotels. Therefore, international tourists staying in five-star hotels would have more behavioral intentions in comparison with the ones in four-stars, if they perceived the value of the outcome quality offered by these hotels.

In order to calculate the mediating role of perceived value in the effect of the outcome quality (the independent variable) on behavioral intention (the dependent variable), the mediating model was utilized. Consequently, two direct and indirect models were constructed for each of the four-star and five-star hotels samples and these two models were then compared. Both the indirect model and the comprehensive mediating model displayed the required fit; yet, given the fact that the comprehensive mediating model showed an AIC value lower than that of the indirect model (1,429.847 in the comprehensive model vs 1,458.964 in the indirect model), and that the PNFI in the comprehensive model was larger than that of the indirect model (0.778 in comprehensive model and 0.779 in the indirect model), the comprehensive mediating model was used to analyze the data. The reason for this is that, in line with the observations of Hooper et al. (2008), the models with smaller AICs and larger PNFIs would provide better fits.

In both groups of guests in four-star and five-star hotels, perceived value had a mediating role in the effect of outcome quality on behavioral intention because in the direct model, in both groups the standard $\beta$ was more than the value of the comprehensive mediating model. However, because in both of the models the $p$-value remained unchanged (less than 0.001), the role of perceived value (the mediating variable) in the effect of outcome quality on behavioral intention was partial.

3.4.3 The second model. In the second model, all the dimensions related to behavioral intention and attitudinal loyalty were considered in the form of a composite loyalty construct. Figures 5–6 demonstrate the model in relation to both groups. In this model, composite loyalty was composed of five dimensions: emotional commitment, trust, switching costs, revisit intention and WOM. In this model the effect of outcome quality was either directly or indirectly investigated through perceived value. Composite loyalty, as examined and confirmed in other studies, was a combination of behavioral intention and attitudinal loyalty (Dimitriades, 2006; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007; Zins, 2001).

As Table V shows, like the first model, the second model, too, revealed that the distance between the $\chi^2$ values in the limited and unlimited model in relation to the perceptions of international tourists staying in four- and five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur about the impact of outcome quality and perceived value on composite loyalty, with three degrees of freedom, was 85.722, which was beyond the standard threshold of 3.84. Therefore, the impacts of hotels classification on the effect of outcome quality on perceived value and composite loyalty was significant. Then in this model, the impact of each of the variables in the four-star and five-star hotels was separately examined (see Table VI).

It was also found that in the second model, the effect of outcome quality on perceived value in the four-star hotels group (standard $\beta = 0.675$) was more than that in the five-star hotels group (standard $\beta = 0.457$). The same condition also appeared to be true for the other two equations, i.e. the effects of outcome quality and perceived value on composite loyalty (standard $\beta = 0.442$ and 0.595, respectively) were higher in the four-star hotels group in comparison with the five-star hotels group (standard $\beta = 0.314$ and 0.624, respectively). In the second model, the standardized $\beta$ in both groups was higher than the comprehensive mediating model value, but no change was observed in the $p$-value; as a result, perceived value had a partial mediating role in the effect of outcome quality on composite loyalty.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

Carefully examining the rising trends of competition in the hospitality industry, managers constantly try to foster a sense of loyalty in their customers/clients who, under favorable conditions, can become lifelong patrons. Creating customer loyalty is one of the important strategies of service organizations, especially those in the hospitality industry.
Having awareness of clients’ diverse viewpoints/expectations regarding different residential sectors can help managers to make plans according to the rates of their hotels and to successfully attract more clients.

Perceived value, attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention are crucial elements for business success in the hospitality industry, and today’s competitive atmosphere demands understanding and monitoring such factors at various managerial levels. From a theoretical viewpoint, the present comparative study sheds light on the current knowledge of hospitality services by empirically examining the relationships between the factors mentioned above in the context of four-star and five-star hotels and their roles in attracting tourists in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is of note that this city is a tourism destination, which offers a variety of hotels with classifications ranging from non-star to five-star.

A number of studies have scrutinized hotel customers’ perception of the outcome quality (Baldacchino, 1995; Choi and Kim, 2013; Kang, 2006; Wuest, 2001; Wu and Ko, 2013). Furthermore, many studies have investigated the quality of services in diverse industries and have accordingly recommended appropriate solutions for the flourishing of the industry under investigation in line with the relevant theories (Bloemer et al., 1999; Cronin et al., 2000;
Figure 6  Structural model of outcome quality toward composite loyalty in five-star hotels

Notes: \( \chi^2 (df) = 2,591.433 (1,303); \) \( p \)-value \( (\geq 0.05) = 0.000; \) Relative \( \chi^2 (\leq 5) = 1.989; \) GFI \( (\geq 0.9) = 0.736; \) CFI \( (\geq 0.9) = 0.898; \) IFI \( (\geq 0.9) = 0.899; \) RMSEA \( (\leq 0.08) = 0.053 \)

Table V  \( \chi^2 \) values in two models for the second model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limit model</td>
<td>2,677.165</td>
<td>1,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimit model</td>
<td>2,591.443</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>85.722</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI  Standardized regression coefficient in the structural model in the second model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Four-star model</th>
<th>Five-star model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome quality → perceived value</td>
<td>0.675***</td>
<td>0.457***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome quality → composite loyalty</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td>0.314***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value → composite loyalty</td>
<td>0.595***</td>
<td>0.624***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *** \( p < 0.001 \)
Brady and Cronin, 2001; Dimitriades, 2006; Brodie et al., 2009; Choi and Kim, 2013; Joung et al., 2016; Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research elaborating on a difference in the viewpoints of the customers in two major groups of hotels (four and five stars) in terms of the impact of outcome quality on both loyalty dimensions, including attitudinal loyalty and behavioral intention.

The results obtained through this study are consistent with the ones reported by Choi and Kim (2013) and Liat and Abdul-Rashid (2011), proving the impact of outcome quality on loyalty via customer satisfaction. Also, the results of this study are in agreement with the research undertaken by Gallerza and Saura (2006), substantiating the relationship between service quality, value and loyalty.

As regards, the results of this research, by taking into account the TRA, contribute to the body of knowledge and the literature related to loyalty and behavioral intention. Since the TRA is considered as a theory predictive of the customer behavior, our results could be beneficial in support for this theory by predicting the impact of perceived value (affected by outcome quality) on the behavior of the hotel guests, measured in terms of loyalty with two variables, namely, behavioral intention and attitudinal loyalty. As such, the present research can address the literature gap in relation to the comparison between the customers viewpoints on the services offered in four-star and five-star hotels.

The results of this study are important for researchers. How to distinguish customers’ expectations of services in both groups of hotel visitors and the effects of these expectations on perceived value and loyalty can guide researchers in future surveys. Outcome quality, perceived value, behavioral intention and attitudinal loyalty were analyzed within an incorporated model and the effects of these variables were compared in two groups of international tourists who stayed in four- or five-star hotels. These results not only support the TRA logic and the related literature, but also help researchers in future studies.

The results of the research demonstrated that depending on the type of hotel, the customers will have a different perception regarding the services provided by these hotels; indeed, this could serve as a scientific framework to guide the hotel managers in anticipating different customer responses concerning the hotel type. Given the different customer perceptions about four-star hotels and five-star hotels, the customers’ expectation of the services offered by five-star hotels is much higher as that of the four-star types. In effect, the results of the study implied that they perceived the services in this category with a lesser degree in comparison with the customers of four-star hotels, which could be due to their social background or the costs being expended, and that would be a stimulating topic for the future research in this field. Although the results of this research indicate the difference in the customer perception of the services provided depending on the type of the hotel, the results from both of the reviewed groups indicate that customer perception of the quality and value of the services offered by the service provider leads to a tendency to repurchase as well as advising the others.

3.5.1 Managerial implications. Traveling on a global scale and increased accessibility of previously remote tourist destinations are some factors that have intensified competition for destination managers (Žabkar et al., 2010). Hotel managers’ awareness of the factors influencing loyalty can be helpful in formulating their hotel performance planning (Tanford, 2013). The findings of this study are important for policymakers in the hospitality industry, because the study identified the behaviors of a large number of hospitality clients who wished to use suitable services in a rapidly changing visitor economy (Lu and Kandampully, 2016).

This investigation further examined a sample of international tourists’ viewpoints concerning the impact of services on loyalty in four-star and five-star hotels. It primarily showed that outcome quality (with three dimensions: sociability, valence and waiting time) (in)directly affected loyalty through perceived value. The effects were indeed different in both groups of tourists as in most cases, except the effect of perceived value on behavioral intention, these effects were probably higher in four-star hotels than in the five-star ones. Considering the fact that the population under study included international tourists, the loyalty of the tourists can be questioned as it is not clear whether they would travel to Kuala Lumpur in the future or not.
One of the dimensions of behavioral intention (WOM) showed that the effect of outcome quality could help attract more international tourists; that is, hotel guests who received quality services would recommend the hotel in question to others and encourage them to book this hotel. In upscale (four-star) and luxury (five-star) hotels, environmental modes of service, which include cleanliness and maintenance of the facilities and guestrooms, may be more consistently managed. In addition, certain service product attributes, such as exercise facilities, swimming pools, restaurants and gift shops, are viewed as absolute necessities and are not seen as sources of competitive advantage; these components of a hotel experience shape a proportion of the price of checking into the upscale and luxury segments of the industry. Consequently, intangible feelings associated with service delivery, such as staff courtesy and efficiency, may serve as the distinguishing elements based on which service quality is evaluated by consumers in a high-end hotel environment (Rauch et al., 2015).

Results of this research could also give valuable insights to five-star hotel managers, whose clients may be more sensitive compared to the ones staying in four-star hotels, as far as the quality of the services provided is concerned. Perceptions of quality stemming from hotel attributes (in)directly affect behavioral intention. However, as it was stated in this study, although all the dimensions of outcome quality played an important role in the guests’ understanding of the quality of hotel services, four-star hotel managers must pay attention to valence, whereas five-star hotel managers must give priority to waiting time.

Furthermore, the most important factor influencing perceived value in four-star hotels was emotion, which included factors such as pleasurable experience, a sense of relaxation, positive feelings, satisfaction and comfort. On the other hand, in five-star hotels social self-concept left the highest impact, with factors such as gratification, sophistication and freshness. Because quality in tourism is evaluated by consumers and could be measured through some service dimensions (Zabkar et al., 2010), the findings in this study indicate that hotel managers have to pay attention to a wide range of hotel attributes when managing destination offerings. Concerning loyalty, in four-star hotels the costs of switching the hotel had the largest impact, while WOM left such an impact in five-star hotels.

Concerning the quality–value–loyalty chain, the study highlights a clear pattern: quality is an antecedent of perceived value and loyalty is the behavioral consequence of perceived value, while behavior represents the final outcome. This finding seems plausible both in research and managerial contexts: managers might assume that the level of tourist loyalty, in terms of both revisits and positive WOM, arises from a higher level of quality and value. The results of this study showed that perceived value was one of the most important factors for business success, and it was affected by outcome quality; therefore hotel managers can promote guests’ perceived value by providing higher levels of quality outcome. Moreover, clients of five-star hotels expected more quality services to revisit or encourage others to visit such hotels; therefore, five-star hotels managers must make every effort to meet their guests’ expectations about the quality of services, trying to positively influence clients’ perceived value and behavioral intention.

As the model clarified, perceived quality (in)directly influenced behavioral intentions (commitment and revisit). This implied that an integrated and holistic managerial approach must be practiced to clarify the situation. What a destination offers should be constantly re-constructed with regard to visitors’ perceptions of quality concerning hotel attributes, their satisfaction with the experience they had in the hotel and their future behavioral intentions. Therefore, satisfying tourists’ needs at the destination should not be simply seen as a bundle of hotel attributes per se, but rather as a product of integrated marketing efforts directed toward fostering visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Generally speaking, the results of this study suggested that there are different variables affecting guests’ perception of services quality, perceived value and loyalty in five-star hotels in comparison with four-star hotels. The results can inspire hotel managers to foreground these factors in their hotel marketing strategies. The findings could enhance the review system of the hotels platforms, thus emphasizing the quality indicators that define attitude and ultimately loyalty, although the latter is commonly regarded as a function of tourists’ behavior (Stylos et al., 2017). This research can help hotel managers to understand how clients of their hotels develop loyalty based on the
scale (stars) of the hotels. Understanding both of these factors, hotel managers will be able to adopt more appropriate strategies to keep their current customers while attracting potential guests. Furthermore, the results of this study can help policymakers in the tourism industry to find the key elements encouraging tourists to revisit and make recommendations.

3.5.2 Limitations and future research. Because the sample in this research was selected only from the international tourists staying in four-star and five-star hotels in Malaysia, one must exercise caution when generalizing the results to the entire population of clients using hotels. The research was also limited to four-star and five-star hotels, making it difficult to generalize the results to other types of hotels and resorts. However, it is possible to rely on the same research model for other hotels and other customers for further studies. The study drew on a cross-sectional form of research, although tourists normally travel throughout the year and stay in hotels; as a result generalizing the results to the whole statistical population should be done with caution. This research only examined the relationship between the latent constructs of outcome quality, perceived value, behavioral intention and composite loyalty; however, it must be pinpointed that each construct itself involves multiple dimensions. Further studies can focus on the impact of each dimension, trying to formulate a better map of the situation to more practically guide planners in the industry.

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Further reading


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African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and tourism development in Africa: contribution, contradiction and implications

Vanessa Gowreesunkar

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the contributions of Agenda 2063 in tourism development in Africa while examining the inherent contradictions in its implementation. Ultimately, it brings out a meaningful synthesis of the overall implications and proposes recommendations for an equitable and sustainable tourism development in Africa.

Design/methodology/approach – This study draws from desk-based research and content analysis of documents and research studies related to Agenda 2063. A hypothetico-deductive approach was adopted, as this allowed for the deconstruction of text and context.

Findings – The findings reveal several internal inconsistencies which cuts like a double-edge sword. Empirical results show that Africa can emerge as a desirable destination if the aspirations of Agenda 2063 are appropriately popularized and operationalized. African countries need to align their tourism plans with the aspirations projected in the plan. It is imperative that the African Union (AU) oversees that there is consistent and sustainable tourism development across all member states.

Research limitations/implications – The study draws from and relies solely on available secondary data. This implies that unofficial and unpublicized secondary data (proceedings, concept notes, position papers and archived documents) developed from AU’s conferences and workshops have not been considered. The outcome might therefore be indicative, but not necessarily reflective of trends and hidden realities of Africa.

Practical implications – The outcome of this empirical study provides an improved understanding of opportunities and challenges faced by African countries seeking to develop tourism as an economic activity. It unveils discrepancies which need address and further articulates recommendations which are practical and workable to achieve the aspiration of Agenda 2063 to be a “United Africa.”

Social implications – The study provides valuable information for the socio-economic transformation of the continent, one of the aspirations of Agenda 2063. It further seeks to promote social and economic development based on a spirit of Pan-Africanism.

Originality/value – Unlike previous studies, this exploratory piece of paper provides a meaningful synthesis of Agenda 2063 from a unique perspective – the double-edge sword approach; it examines the potentials and opportunities the agenda triggers for tourism and at the same time, reveals its contradictions.

Keywords Tourism development, Implications, Agenda 2063, African Union

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

In 2013, the Heads of State of African countries launched the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, a blueprint to drive Africa’s development and transformation for the next 50 years. The AU regroups 55 African countries and Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework comprising several aspirations to guide the Union in its vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa (African Union Report, 2018). Due to the growing potential of tourism in Africa, one of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is particularly dedicated to tourism. Tourism in Africa is indeed booming, and it is the sector that is energizing...
economies and fueling economic transformation in Africa (Christie et al., 2009). This observation is well supported by world statistics. Tourism in Africa contributes 5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), 30 percent of service exports, and 235m jobs and by 2030, consumer spending on tourism and hospitality in Africa is projected to reach about $261.77bn (UNCTAD, 2017; UNWTO, 2018). To this effect, most countries in the region have developed their own strategic plans to develop tourism. For instance, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania have put significant efforts into advancing travel and tourism development, while Botswana, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa are already attracting tourism investors along with tourists (Signé, 2018).

The AU has not remained insensitive to this trend. In fact, the Union deployed various mechanisms to popularize and operationalize Agenda 2063 in the interest of tourism. Along with its Regional Economic Communities (RECs), it endorsed the continent’s Tourism Action Plan (TAP), developed flagship projects such as the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) to protect African airlines, and proposed the “African passport” to facilitate movement within Africa. However, when on one side, Agenda 2063 seems to support tourism, on the other side, issues like geopolitical insecurity, visa regimes, cross-border travel and terrorism continue to hinder tourism progress in Africa. The double-edge aspect (Jafari, 2001) and the Janus-faced character of tourism (Séraphin et al., 2017) seem to be a reality here. In fact, many African countries are still perceived as insecure and unattractive due to political instability, terrorism, visa issues, conflicts and violence (Signé, 2018), whereas security concerns linked to terrorism have continually been reported in tourism studies (Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison, 2018; Goodrich, 2002; Hu and Goldblatt, 2005; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). Even more developed African destinations (like Algeria, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia and Botswana) continue to face security issues along with poor infrastructural and institutional support such as unsafe roads, inadequate water supply and sanitation, connectivity problems, access to hospitals and inferior technology. With this as a background, this conceptual paper seeks to shed some light on the role of Agenda 2063 in progressing tourism across Africa. The research investigates two critical components: first, the potentials and opportunities Agenda 2063 triggers for tourism and hence, the contribution; and second, the issues and challenges hindering tourism progress in Africa and hence the contradiction. The findings are further elaborated and analyzed in order to understand the implications. From a methodological point of view, this conceptual paper adopts a hypothetico-deductive approach, which is mostly associated with desk-based research relying on extensive literature reviewing. Overall, this approach attempts to produce a meaningful synthesis of the overall situation. It suggests necessary actions for improving tourism development under Agenda 2063. The paper is finally concluded by articulating several implications and limitations.

Contextual and conceptual underpinnings

African Union and Agenda 2063

The AU was officially launched in July 2002, with the aim of regrouping African countries and proposing action plans to protect the interests and rights of its citizens. To date, the AU comprises 55 African countries and the key role is to propose projects and implement action plans leading to the optimization of resources and a fair share of economic wealth among Africans. This Pan-Africanism spirit led to milestone initiatives that were manifested in the setting up of Regional Economic Committees like the East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). RECs have specialized roles to play in integrating Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals set to end poverty and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, Agenda 2063 of the AU also works toward a similar vision. Agenda 2063 was adopted in May 2013 and it projects the picture of the African continent over the next 45 years – “The Africa We Want.” Tourism, as a critical driver of inclusive growth, job opportunities and wealth creation, was integrated based on its potential in achieving most of the targets of the SDGs. Agenda 2063 proposes a set of action plan and aspires African countries to be:

- an integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s renaissance;
a United Africa by 2063;
- have world-class, integrative infrastructure over the continent;
- have dynamic and mutually beneficial links with her Diaspora;
- be a continent with seamless borders, and management of cross-border resources through dialogue; and
- a continent where the free movement of people, capital, goods and services will result in significant increases in trade and investments among African countries rising to unprecedented levels, and strengthen Africa’s place in global trade (adapted from African Union Online Report, 2018).

Tourism in Africa

Historically, Africa is a land of conflicts. According to a Peace Report produced by Bakken and Rustad (2018), Africa experienced 18 state-based conflicts with 7,500 battle-related deaths, and 50 non-state conflicts with 4,300 deaths in 2017. Other forms of conflicts also affected the image of Africa, namely, the apartheid regime in South Africa, ethnic and inter-state conflict in Mali, Niger and Sudan, civil and colonial war in Uganda and South Sudan, terrorism in Nigeria and political conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that African countries have characteristics of post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations (PCCDs) as reported in the study of Seraphin and Gowreesunkar (2017a). A further study by Seraphin et al. (2013) in Haiti shows that tourism can contribute positively to the economic and social well-being of a population living in PCCDs only if conditions such as government support, pro-tourism policies, education and access to finance are met. Consequently, with the help of supportive agencies like the United Nations World Tourism Organization, African Development Bank, AU, World Travel & Tourism Council among others, many African countries previously perceived as risky and unattractive have managed to catch up and transform their images through successful tourism campaigns. To cite a few examples, South Africa promotes Robben Island for dark tourism (Strange and Kempa, 2003); Rwanda features its endangered mountain gorillas for nature tourism (Grosspietsch, 2006); Ethiopia and Egypt capitalize on their culture and offer cultural tourism (Shanka and Frost, 1999; Bendix, 2002) while Kenya does so on its Maasai tribe (Tignor, 2015). The UNWTO (2018) predicts that tourism will be one of the main drivers of economic growth in Africa over the coming decade. This is supported by statistics showing that international tourist arrivals on the whole continent increased by nearly 36m between 2000 and 2017, and tourism contributed toward 9.1m direct jobs in travel and tourism, and generated $39.2bn in international tourism receipts (AFDB, 2018, p. 4). Despite being badly hit by conflicts, and crises, tourism has been the only sector significantly contributing to enable most African economies to catch up (Christie et al., 2009).

Tourism cities in Africa

Empirical studies (Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison, 2018; Warnaby, 1998; Judd, 1995) show that cities are conductors of tourism as they have the potential to induce a new form of tourism based on urbanism. In parallel, it is observed that the rapid growth of mobility and connectivity has not only boosted tourism, but also created a new breed of tourists of which characteristics can be explained along a spectrum of cosmopolitanism and metropolitanism. The “new city tourists” are highly sophisticated, urbanized and permanently connected and they contribute extensively in advancing economies and shaping tourism images worldwide. If world trends show a culture of urbanism in tourism, one of the goals of Agenda 2063 should imperatively address mobility and connectivity between tourism cities in Africa.

In as much that Africa is perceived as a poor continent in the world, it is blessed with some potential tourism cities that can reverse this perception and contrarily, attract urban tourism. These cities represent landmarks and therefore have the potential not only to induce tourism across the continent, but also to compete with cities like Madrid (Spain), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Hyderabad (India) and Tokyo (Japan). According to Coutts (2018), some of the popular cities of Africa are Cape Town (South Africa), Cairo (Egypt), Port Louis (Mauritius), Marrakech and
Casablanca (Morocco), Lagos and Abuja (Nigeria), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Tunis (Tunisia). However, it is important to recognize that cities in Africa face different degree of challenges and hence cannot be treated by a “one size fits all” formula. Many African cities have weak, embryonic tourism sectors, while other countries have vigorous, more developed tourism sectors (Rogerson, 2017; Otiso et al., 2011). For example, tourism performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo cannot be compared to that of South Africa or Morocco, as the former country has to address food security and potable water issues first as compared to the latter countries which are enjoying higher levels of economic development. If Africa intends to capitalize on its cities for tourism promotion and development, policies should consider the linkages between African cities along with the development of infrastructures to facilitate tourism-induced transactions, a point also highlighted in the work of many (Fraser, 2014; Teye, 1986). These linkages can benefit weak-performing destinations by re-orienting their images toward a different form of tourism (e.g. promoting their historical assets for dark tourism or adventure tourism). For instance, the image of Lagos (Nigeria) is blurred by terrorism despite its potential of attracting urban tourism, whereas the city of Casablanca (Morocco) is an established tourism destination. The harmonization of tourism plans across African cities can help in reviving less attractive cities, which go unnoticed in tourism maps. Certainly, Agenda 2063 is to be a vehicle for transforming Africa; however, the continent needs to focus on mobility and connectivity, two important drivers of tourism. To this effect, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is a strategic program of action intended to connect the African port and shipping sector through world-class infrastructure, including interconnectivity between island states and the mainland.

Another reality of African cities is that most suffer the consequences of rural conflicts taking place in remote areas. Lagos, which has great tourism potential, is negatively perceived by tourists due to one of the terrorism camps based in another state (Borno), a remote area of Nigeria. Due to one terrorist attack in Nigeria, the whole of Africa is often perceived as a high-risk destination. Image-building and branding are serious concerns for Africa and the beauty of African cities are often blurred by media stories, which are often composed to create sensationalism out of conflicts, disasters and terrorism occurring across Africa. African cities are sometimes lost elements in tourism, whereas they could have significant potential to attract urban tourism. In attempting to change visitors’ images of Africa, a re-education effort needs to be implemented highlighting discrepancies between people’s perceptions of countries and current reality. The marketing and promotion of tourism cities as a transformed tourism product based on the “new metropolitan and cosmopolitan tourists” is therefore important while formulating tourism policies.

Travel and tourism in Africa

Tourism refers to the activities of the tourists and, by its very basic definition, comprises the movement of people within and outside destinations (Xiao and Smith, 2006; Hall, 1989; Wall and Mathieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2018). While a traveler might not necessarily be a tourist, a tourist is definitely a traveler. Without travel, tourism cannot take place. This suggests that travel and tourism are inexorably linked and have significant importance in the global tourism economy. According to the WTTC Report (2018), the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 3.8 percent to $3,890bn (3.6 percent of GDP) by 2028. This suggests that transport infrastructure is a significant determinant of tourism inflows into destinations (Khadaroor and Seezam, 2008). Moreover, analysts predict that the majority of international travelers will prefer emerging and developing countries as their destinations of choice by 2030, especially driven by the growth in the adventure and nature tourism subsectors (UNWTO, 2017, p. 14). Tourists are constantly looking for new destinations to visit and because traveling appears as a need for self-fulfillment, even destinations with negative images are visited by tourists. For instance, Iran received 5,327,000 visitors in 2016, Algeria 1,710,000, Chad 120,000 and Yemen 366,700 (Séraphin et al., 2017). UNWTO (2018) finds that the preferred mode of travel for most
tourists traveling across Africa is air transport (55.8 percent for Africa as a whole and 36.2 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa). Global tourism trends are indeed aligning with what Africa has to offer, as international tourists are increasingly interested in developing countries as travel destinations (Signé, 2018). Thus, looking to the future, there is substantial room for growth in Africa's travel and tourism market despite being perceived as an insecure destination.

The Single African Air Travel Market

By now, it is established that transport access in moving people from one place to another is vital in tourism. Without travel, tourism cannot take place. The Single African Air Travel Market launched by the AU is one of the AU’s Pan-African Agenda 2063 flagship projects, aiming to improve air connectivity in Africa. The idea was based on the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision, when African ministers responsible for civil aviation agreed to deregulate air services, put in place mechanisms for fair competition and dispute settlement and liberalize frequencies and tariffs. In so doing, the AU hoped to encourage cross-border investment and innovation, improve business operations and efficiency, increased route competition resulting in lower fares, create more jobs, help airlines grow and allow for the free mobility of people and goods. The single market is also host to Africa’s busiest airports including Bole International Airport in Ethiopia and O.R. Tambo in Johannesburg, South Africa. Up to 15 carriers, which account for more than 70 percent of intra-African air travel, have also signed up for the common market including Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, South African Express and Egypt Air (WTTC Report, 2018).

Methodology

From a methodological point of view, this conceptual paper adopts a hypothetico-deductive approach that Hammond and Wellington (2013) define as desk-based research relying on literature reviewing. This approach also “involves generating and formulating quite specific hypotheses about phenomena generally based on existing practical and theoretical knowledge” (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p. 41). Within the paradigm of theory building and exploratory approach, this conceptual study relies on a traditional or narrative literature review and analysis of research and secondary data on Agenda 2063, the AU and tourism development in Africa. A meta-synthesis approach was employed by integrating, evaluating and interpreting results and findings of previous studies and reports with the specific aim of transforming the past individual findings into new conceptualizations and interpretations (Polit and Beck, 2006). This epistemological stance and methodological approach allows researchers to then “formulate theoretical propositions about the phenomena generally on the basis of existing practical and theoretical knowledge” (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p. 41). In line with this methodological approach, the present study examines the role of Agenda 2063 in progressing or regressing tourism in Africa. Qualitative content analysis was adapted so as to discuss the implications. The qualitative content analysis was a suitable research method as it allowed for the deconstruction of text and the identification of trends.

Agenda 2063 and tourism in Africa – the contributions

To move forward Agenda 2063, the AU has put in place an array of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). As described earlier, these agencies are playing critical roles in implementing Agenda 2063 by collaborating in various tourism spheres, namely, visa, air connectivity and transportation among others. They include Regional Inter-governmental and Inter-parliamentary Bodies, such as the EAC, COMESA, IGAD, SADC, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States and Arab Maghreb Union. Moreover, Agenda 2063 provides an initial framework for engagement with regards to the elevation of aviation transport infrastructure and connecting all African capitals and commercial centers through the Africa Integrated High-Speed Train Initiative, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) transport corridors; improved efficiency and connections of the African aviation sector and implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD); and strengthening the African port and shipping sector as regional and continental assets.
The Tourism Action Plan (TAP)

The tourism sector in Africa is still at an early stage of growth. Studies and reports show that the tourism sector has only recently begun to grow in Africa and remains relatively under-developed and concentrated in a handful of key markets (Signé, 2018; UNWTO, 2018; WTTC Report, 2018). A study conducted by Séraphin et al. (2018) on Caribbean Islands shows that development of clusters is important in tourism destinations. The study explains that the tourism sector is ambidextrous by nature (Sanchez and Adams, 2008) and the development of clusters allows continental destinations like Africa to identify themselves using the unique selling points of each destination (exploitation) and developing new tourism products such as multi-destination tours around specific themes (exploration). This study shows that it is also important that each destination keeps maintains its authenticity, as this is considered as one of the most powerful “pull” (supply side) factors. Based on this logic, if Africa is to capitalize on its tourism and compete worldwide, it needs to look at ways in which the sector can be promoted through clusters and regions. It is against this background that the African Ministers of Tourism identified initiatives to develop an action plan for tourism at a continental level. The TAP is a continental framework for sustainable tourism in Africa and was adopted at the third General Assembly of the AU on July 6–8, 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The framework operates under the NEPAD, which has the role to identify partners and work together to make tourism an effective vehicle for regional integration. The TAP focusses in six key areas, namely:

1. policies and regulatory environment;
2. institutional capacity;
3. tourism marketing;
4. research and development;
5. investment in tourism infrastructure and products; and
6. human resources and quality assurance.

The Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD)

The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), a flagship project of the AU, seeks to liberalize and unify the African skies. In November 1999, African Ministers in charge of Civil Aviation met in Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire, to discuss the liberalization of air services. The conference resulted in the adoption of the decision relating to the implementation of the YD concerning the liberalization of access to Air Transport Markets in Africa. The YD was then formally adopted during the Assembly of Heads of State held in Lomé, Togo, on July 10–12, 2000. So far, 44 countries have committed to the plan. The main objectives of the YD are:

- encouraging of African airlines to enter into cooperation agreements among themselves;
- eliminating obstacles that may hinder the achievement of the objectives of the AU Agenda 2063;
- promoting the development of regional and continental aviation infrastructure and services in a holistic manner based on the policies and programs of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and through PIDA;
- facilitating air connectivity by implementing the regulatory texts of the YD;
- harmonizing legislation to promote free movement, remove all barriers and improve safety and security in air transport operations; and
- encouraging the establishment of regional safety and security oversight, strengthen search and rescue as well as accident investigation organizations (African Union Report, 2018).

Given the scope the challenges in implementing the YD, the AU was entrusted to coordinate and facilitate the process of operationalization of the SAATM and engage all specialized institutions in the aviation sector to support Member States in this process. Countries which initially joined this commitment are Benin, Cape Verde, Congo Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
Agenda 2063 and tourism in Africa – the contradictions

Connectivity issues

While Agenda 2063 seems to be operating in line with the above initiatives to progress tourism across the continent, issues such as security, political stability and accessibility continue to hinder its development. According to the AU, the success of Agenda 2063 lies in collaboration and discussion among stakeholders and on how the continent can learn from lessons of the past, build on progress underway and explore new opportunities to ensure positive socio-economic transformation within the next 50 years (Oropo, 2015). However, evidence shows that most of the aspirations of the Agenda 2063 have remained grounded due to lack of commitment from member states and their internal politics (Visser, 2017; Amupanda, 2018). The paradox of the Agenda 2063 program is now described in greater detail. To start with, the vision of a prospective Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development has been blurred mainly by a lack of Pan-Africanism among member states. The tourism sector has been given wings but has not been trained to fly. From the supply side, air transport and transport infrastructure remain the biggest challenge for travel and tourism development in Africa. Lack of international openness is a further area that requires policy attention at the regional level. The SAATM was established to liberalize and unify the African skies, but only 44 African countries (out of 55) signed the agreement promising to promote competitive markets and remove regulatory barriers (World Bank, 2014). The problem is also compounded by restrictive regulations, protectionist legal barriers mixed with inadequate infrastructure, high taxes and stubborn nationalism. Countries across the continent have displayed protectionist tendencies to limit others’ access to their own airspace. Airlines trying to launch a new route between African nations need to first secure permission from both countries, which can be a lengthy and expensive prospect that may or may not involve significant bribes.

From the demand side, the unsupportive conditions of airlines have discouraged tourists from travel across Africa. For instance, a traveler needs to change two planes and fly 12 h to travel from Kinshasa (DRC) to Lagos, despite that only 1,100 miles separate the two cities. There is no direct flight to connect these two cities. A further example shows that traveling from Kampala (Uganda) to Bujumbura, the lakeside capital of Burundi, requires connecting flights and stopovers, despite being only 450 miles apart. Moreover, trip costs increase along with the number of hours. The lack of competition in turn impacts on the costs of tickets and airport and landing charges. In fact, in some cases, it is faster for a passenger to fly through Europe rather than use an African hub. Countries that have been more active in signing bilateral agreements – Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa – have been able to create strong state-owned carriers. For instance, Ethiopian Airline, a state-owned airline, is the only profitable African carrier and has some of the best reach across the continent. In the absence of a continental open-skies agreement, Ethiopian Airlines has sought out bilateral deals with other carriers. While it is understood that circumstances have caused the airlines to operate in a non-Pan-Africanism spirit, the Agenda 2063 Aspiration of a United Africa by 2063 with world-class, integrative infrastructure over the continent is challenged.

Visa issues

In addition to open-skies policies, in many cases, visa policies are still very restrictive, especially in Western Africa. While Agenda 2063 aspires for free movement of people and trade, this is not the case while moving people across the continent. To travel to another African countries, Africans still need visas to enter 55 percent of states on the continent. Only 20 percent of nations allow Africans to enter without visas, with 25 percent are offering visas on arrival. The paradox is that foreigners have less hassles to travel to Africa than Africa’s own citizens. This represents a real contradiction for tourism, “the movement industry.” The Agenda 2063 aspiration of the free movement of people, capital, goods and service within the continent is therefore also challenged.

The single aviation market

The flagship programs for Agenda 2063 include high-speed train across the continent, a single aviation market, sustainable energy sources, free movement of people among African
countries, a continental free trade area and e-network. To operate effectively and benefit more Africans, free movement of people is required as it encourages domestic tourism. Whereas some states have refused to open their skies to each other, they have opened up to carriers from other continents. Non-African carriers are given favorable traffic rights whilst the same is denied to African operators. For instance, 17 foreign airlines are currently benefiting from fifth freedom rights between certain African cities as compared to African airlines. Moreover, IATA (2017) has found that for a few years now traveling by air is more expensive in Africa than anywhere else. As such, Africans are more willing to travel to Dubai, London or Paris rather than to another African country. This situation does not correspond to the notion of Pan-Africanism as reflected in the aspirations of Agenda 2063. Rather, it not only deters domestic tourists, but also international tourists and potential tourism investors for the continent. The Agenda 2063 aspiration of an integrated continent based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism is once more challenged.

**Political issues**

Political instability in Africa is an issue of concern to tourists. In December 2018, the national elections at the DRC led to significant violence where people were killed, and others displaced from their homes. This situation is recurrent in many African countries and in some cases, incidents are planned deliberately for power and position. A critical study by Oropo (2015) suggests that the objectives of the Agenda 2063 for a United Africa based on fair share and equality are laudable, but it has also bred many corrupt leaders under the shield of sovereignty. While promoting Pan-African democracy, some countries are being run by autocrats, whereas adhering members are expected to ensure that governments meet democratic principles and have sound economic practices. The study of Oropo (2015) further posits that Agenda 2063 has failed to address prevailing challenges such as good governance and accountability, corruption and inequality, uneven distribution of resources and social welfare policies (Oropo, 2015). Skeptics also point out that, the AU operates under significant constraints which limit the scope of its ability to achieve Agenda 2063. For example, despite being paid affiliation fees by 55 member states, the AU gives the impression of facing immense financial challenges to implement developmental projects, whereas funds are always available to conduct meetings and conferences for its leaders who travel in business class, who are lodged in five-star hotels, and paid large “per diems.” Such international “get-togethers” are well supported by statements like the popularizing of Agenda 2063, which remains in “status quo” for years due to changing members who are unable to follow up. The Agenda 2063 aspiration of a politically united continent based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism is also challenged.

**Safety and security**

The tourism sector is safety and security dependent (Tarlow and Santana, 2002), but studies show it being portrayed as a fertile ground for terrorism (Seraphin and Gowreesunkar, 2017a; Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison, 2018). Terrorism operates under the logic of uncertainty and surprise-factor, and it seems to be one of the major problems for tourism, because of the messages it generates (Skoll and Korstanje, 2014). While African Governments are capitalizing considerably on opportunities and investments generated by tourism, insecurity issues caused by terrorism and conflicts are hindering their tourism plans. The evidence from Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison (2018) and Howie (2014) provide a sufficient research foundation to explain the relationship between terrorism and tourism: terrorism affects tourism businesses, foreign investment, physical environment, tourism resources and images of destinations, among others. The perception of risk is inherently related to destination image (Carballo et al., 2017) and it influences destination choice (Tasci and Boylu, 2010). Tourists are attracted by favorable impressions, and the existence of security and safety is essential for that (Hall and O’Sullivan, 1996). While tourism has always been cited as the sector which fosters peace worldwide (Chauhan and Khanna, 2008; McIntosh, 2017), more evidence shows otherwise: tourism is increasingly seen as a fertile ground for terrorism. The aspirations of peaceful and conflict-free inclusive societies for sustainable development are challenged.
Cross-border issues

Agenda 2063 aspires for Africa to be continent of seamless borders, whereas management of cross-border resources necessitates effective border governance and dialogue between countries sharing common borders. However, not all stakeholders are interested in the viability of tourism attractions, when their principal objective for operating a tourism business is money (Gowreesunker and Sotiriades, 2015; Gowreesunker and Rycha, 2014). While tourism in the African region is mainly driven by natural tourism, there is ample room for improvement in the way these common resources are managed. For instance, Lake Tanganyika is a potential tourism resource shared by four countries, namely, Burundi, Congo, Zambia and Tanzania. Each country is capitalizing on the lake to promote their own tourism. This reminds one of Hardin’s Tragedy of the Common, which explains that when resources are commonly owned, they are quickly depleted due to over-exploitation, mismanagement and lack of control. In the absence of a shared vision, countries often compete with each other and, in the process, heritage and natural resources are exploited by tourism operators. Agenda 2063’s aspiration of a continent with seamless borders, and management of cross-border resources through dialogue is challenged.

Agenda 2063 and tourism in Africa – implications

After identifying the contributions and contradictions generated by Agenda 2063, the implications are now described. Due to no ideological definition of Pan-Africanism and the inability to discern a blueprint for continental unity, the Agenda is interpreted and implemented according to the internal politics of individual African countries. Tourism has been identified as a key sector for poverty alleviation in Africa (Seraphin, Butler and Gowreesunker; Karambakuwa et al., 2011; Mishenga and Owuor, 2009), but weak institutional structures, limited coordination between member states and REC’s internal politics have slowed down the pace of tourism plan implementation. The reality of contemporary Africa is that it is still marked by political, economic, social and linguistic diversity, which are formidable challenges to establishing a supra-national union or a federal state. Some African observers have attributed these differences more to colonial legacy rather than a lack of a common African identity that has often impacted on intra-African cooperation. Tourism in Africa is seen to have a Janus-faced character (Seraphin and Gowreesunker, 2017b) and it looks like a double-edged sword (Jafari, 2001). When on one side, there is a huge potential to promote tourism, on the other side, it is defeating Pan-Africanism. For instance, the African continent is served by various local airlines, such as Kulula, Mango, South African Airways, South African Airlines, Air Rwanda, Air Zambia and Delta among others, but it is reported that foreign airlines enjoy an 80 percent share in Africa (WTTC Report, 2018).

Agenda 2063 is a comprehensive and ambitious blueprint for Africa, but the “one size fits all” formula might not work in a continent comprising 55 countries with 55 different realities and stories. Despite Agenda 2063 promising to work for a United Africa, it cannot be viewed as a panacea. All African countries are not at the same level of development and not all governments have the same level of commitment. Macro-economic performance shows that economic growth varies in African destinations. For instance, tourism performance on Mauritius and in Malawi can never be compared despite being both members of AU and driven by Agenda 2063. This is probably due to country priorities. For example, developed countries like South Africa and Tunisia will ambitiously invest in tourism projects as compared to less developed African countries like South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, which are still struggling for basic necessities like food, potable water, shelter, health and sanitation. Likewise, recent years have seen the launch of numerous regional cooperative efforts like the single visa scheme (SADC members), the Kavango Zambezi common tourist visa by Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the single visa covering three countries (Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda). While such regional cooperation has led to significant economic benefits, a number of African countries are still unwilling to invest and cooperate for visa facilitation. At a time when most African leaders are seeking to boost job creation and economic development, visa facilitation systems and policies can augment tourism revenues and increase employment if Agenda 2063 aspirations are effectively implemented. For instance, Uganda and Rwanda’s tourism receipts increased with improved visa facilitation. If other African regions and countries examine their own visa facilitation regimes, it is envisaged that further tourism gains can
be achieved across the continent for the benefit of all African governments and populations. Moreover, the idea of an African passport has been adopted by the AU, but it remains to be seen, when it will be conceptualized and operationalized.

Another impeding factor that is found to be conflicting with the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is Africa’s connectivity to Africa. The difficulties associated with traveling around the African continent (ranging from visa issues to basic travel infrastructure and flight paths) have traditionally deterred tourists. Likewise, a traveler from Uganda or Burundi cannot fly directly to Dar es Salaam, despite the two countries sharing a border with Tanzania. One must make a connection through Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport or Rwanda’s capital Kigali. A longer route via Addis Ababa, will add 6 h to the journey to Dar es Salaam. Likewise, to travel from Mauritius to Abuja, a tourist might change three flights and spend more than 24 h in the sky due to the unavailability of connecting flights. Similarly, flying from Kigali to Arusha (Tanzania) can take longer than anticipated, because direct flights are not always available, forcing the travelers on this route to either go through Nairobi or Dar es Salaam to catch a connecting flight.

Provision of a safe and secure environment is a critical success factor for tourism development. The findings show that the African tourism sector is especially vulnerable due to exogenous factors like political instability, economic crises, natural disasters and the outbreak of diseases. Those factors can cause destinations to decline and sometimes even totally disappear from the tourism map (Seraphin and Goweressunkar, 2017a). Carballo et al. (2017) and Chiu and Lin (2011) conclude that risk perception is an important aspect in the management of any tourist destination. As already observed, this is a major challenge facing the African destinations due to the prevailing perception of insecurity and political instability. These have the potential to reverse the gains by the sector over the past three decades in global travel. Moreover, Africa’s failure to remarket itself has left the brand overwhelmingly defined by media images of conflict, poverty and disease. Despite its wealth of natural attractions, Africa still only attracts 4.2 percent of the world’s tourists (UNWTO, 2018). Unchallenged negative stereotypes about the continent and an over-reliance on traditional markets are undermining growth in the sector. This can be corrected if Agenda 2063 is rightly popularized and operationalized. The continent can overturn some of its negative clichés and use them to its advantage. For instance, “slum tourism” is now an emerging trend in many PCCD (post-colonial and post-conflict) destinations. Tourism marketers in South Africa (Cape Town) have successfully reversed the image of poor Africa and introduced this new form of tourism. Instead of perceiving Africa as a poor continent, tourists are experiencing authenticity and even contributing directly to the locals’ economy.

Recommendation and conclusion

This invited paper sought to shed some light on the contributions of Agenda 2063 to tourism development in Africa. While appreciating those initiatives, the paper also examined the contradictions emanating from the Agenda. Based on overall findings and empirical evidence, it would seem plausible to suggest that Africa remains a land of opportunities despite being plagued by various issues. Africa can emerge as a desirable destination if the aspirations of Agenda 2063 are appropriately popularized and operationalized. Findings show that African countries have characteristics of post-disaster, post-conflict and post-colonial destinations and they are not at the same level of tourism development. If Agenda 2063 aspires to see a United Africa, African countries need to align their tourism plans with the aspirations projected in the plan. It is imperative that the AU oversees that there is consistent and sustainable tourism development across all member states. For instance, to realize their full potential, the implementation of regional visa facilitation and the Yamoussoukro Decision need to be implemented. Moreover, where national attractions are shared with neighboring countries, clustering strategies, joint or regional promotion and marketing can be effective. Likewise, conferences and meetings could be organized in less attractive destinations like DRC and Sudan. This will put those countries on the tourism map and give the confidence to the tourism market that such countries have potential for tourism. The success of tourism in Africa rests on public sector ability to entrench good governance and democracy. Undoubtedly, the sector cannot develop without improvements in security issues, public health and appropriate tourism infrastructure. Thus, the AU can continue to assume its advisory role and popularize Agenda 2063 to encourage governments of less popular destinations to invest in tourism. By working collectively as partners, tourism in Africa will not only contribute to host...
governments’ revenues, but also develop the spirit of Pan-Africanism. The aspirations of Agenda 2063 are therefore well suited to achieve progress in tourism provided that African countries create the necessary conditions based on pro-tourism policies. Despite the paper’s contribution to Africa tourism research, its limitations should be acknowledged and it is advisable that readers evaluate the findings and research design in the light of prevailing limitations.

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Further reading


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