



**Responsible tourism and place making**

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### Responsible tourism and place making

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

The theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium, "*Responses to the decline in Mass Tourism - Engaging Stakeholders and Effecting Positive Change*", reflected the global decline in mass tourism as travellers, who are increasingly choosing to travel independently, or with smaller tour operators, seek more authenticity in their vacation experiences, with Responsible Tourism issues focusing on initiatives that move away from the current mass tourism model, in particular, challenging the continued growth of All-Inclusive tourism.

Focusing on the theme of "*Connecting People and Places*", the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium recognised that each destination "needs to focus on ... differentiation ... define its own niche markets and serve them accordingly ... to establish their position in the global tourism market" (Sotiriadis and Varvaressos, 2015, p. 330) and most importantly, achieve this in a way that means this position becomes sustainable and does not cause any further societal or environmental degradation.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium concerning "*Thinking and Re-thinking about Places*" reflected developments in both the theory and practice of place management and marketing with places and spaces being contested, formed and re-formed.

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

Moreover, mass tourism based on the tourists' desire for "sun and sea" has also led to the creation of a high tourism season in many such destinations during the peak hot summer months of July and August, and now many of these destinations are attempting to make changes in order to counter this problem. Thus, while tourism is seen as an agent of change, many of its impacts are deemed to be negative, even though tourism may bring much needed economic benefits to destinations.

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3 The first paper in this special issue focuses on narratives of those experiencing tourism  
4 developments on the Greek island destination of Santorini. The final paper in this issue  
5 comes full circle to offer a practitioner account of the way tourism has developed in the resort  
6 of Arillas on the Greek island destination of Corfu. The papers in this special issue all have  
7 one key theme in common, the way tourism developments started in order to improve the lot  
8 of a place and were embraced in an almost romanticised manner, through to disenchantment  
9 and the occurrence of problems brought about by the volatile nature of such a highly  
10 competitive industry, to the current situation where destinations and attractions now have to  
11 be re-imagined and reinvented, whether these occupy physical places and tourism spaces, or  
12 exist in a digital virtual world.  
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15 While the phenomenon of mass tourism may have improved the fortunes of many  
16 Mediterranean destinations since the 1980s, Maria Lichrou, Lisa O'Malley and Maurice  
17 Patterson recognise that the term "mass tourism" is now not only used in a derogatory way,  
18 but the practice is also seen to be at odds with the notion of responsible tourism. Their article  
19 examines tourism development as experienced by the people living and working in a tourism  
20 destination, thus drawing heavily on a narrative perspective that gives emphasis to local  
21 voices. Such tourism development has improved the economy of many Greek destinations,  
22 and contributed to improved social mobility of these destinations' residents. However tourism  
23 development has also brought tensions within local societies such as those on the Greek  
24 island of Santorini that are explored in this article that examines tourism developments as a  
25 particular cultural experience.  
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29 Kavos is a popular tourism destination located at the southernmost point of Corfu. The place  
30 has received notoriety and a great deal of negative publicity in recent years due to the  
31 portrayal on British television, particularly in 'reality'-style programmes, of irresponsible  
32 tourism behaviours of young British holidaymakers who favour the resort. Nicola Williams-  
33 Burnett and Julia Fallon have taken an approach that therefore includes insights into both the  
34 physical and social aspects of place making. Their article compares and contrasts the place's  
35 telepresence image with the way Kavos is perceived by members of the local community.  
36 While explaining how the place has changed over the past 40 years through the development  
37 of mass tourism from a relatively small fishing village into a destination that is portrayed as  
38 one for hard partying where anything goes, they propose that the reality is that this image is  
39 unbalanced. When such programmes focus on only one narrow tourist segment in a high  
40 season that lasts no more than three months of the year, such portrayals neglect changing  
41 patterns throughout the year that includes older tourists, couples, and families who visit  
42 Kavos in the shoulder months either side of the high season, and neglect many other of the  
43 place's stakeholders including those that live and work in the place all year round. This  
44 article also broadened the focus of irresponsible tourism behaviours to those not only of  
45 tourists, but also of some of the individuals and businesses that provide tourism services.  
46 Another impact on place-making that is raised in this article concerns the repatriation of  
47 business profits away from the island, and the low fees accommodation providers can be  
48 offered by tour operators, highlighting some of the reasons for lack of investment in  
49 improving the infrastructure and facilities in the resort.  
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53 The characteristic of seasonality also leads to situations where many tourism service  
54 providers across the Mediterranean do not undertake their roles on a full time basis, because  
55 they are often forced to undertake other activities to contribute to their annual household  
56 income. Lúcia Pato and Elisabeth Kastenholz consider these issues with regard to tourist  
57 lodging providers in two interior rural regions of Portugal (Dão-Lafões and Douro). Their  
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3 research findings evidence that this tends to lead to the majority of these lodging providers in  
4 these regions lacking in a professional or entrepreneurial approach to this aspect of their  
5 livelihoods, and consequently, they undertake only limited marketing activities. Their cluster  
6 analysis did find that the small number of lodging providers who approached their marketing  
7 in a more professional and entrepreneurial manner were much more successful, and  
8 consequently more satisfied with the performance of their tourism businesses. They conclude  
9 that a more systematic marketing effort apparently pays off, increases occupancy rates,  
10 profitability of the business, leads to more satisfaction amongst suppliers and a different type  
11 of involvement with other companies through networking. All this suggests the possibility of  
12 a virtuous circle of a more active attitude together with more professional marketing  
13 orientation and action leading to individual business success, a more positive outlook on the  
14 future, more investment in new product development, continuous adaptation to the market,  
15 networking to improve the experience product, and continuous success that might actually  
16 have a contribution for sustainable rural destination development.  
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20 Taking the case of the Geevor Tin Mine Museum, Timothy Jung and M. Claudia tom Dieck  
21 discuss the way technological developments can provide various ways to enhance the visitor  
22 experience, pre-site, on-site, and post-visit at cultural heritage places, and thus bringing to  
23 this special issue a consideration of the virtual digital world's impact on physical places in a  
24 tourism context. The article focuses on the contribution of particular technological  
25 developments to sustainable tourism growth, through increasing virtual accessibility to  
26 cultural heritage places. The authors present a theoretical framework for future technology  
27 integration through a conceptual model of value co-creation that explains ways cultural  
28 heritage places can introduce a combination of easy to use applications that incorporate the  
29 enhancement of objects and artefacts through fully immersed (virtual) or overlaid  
30 (augmented) digital content, along with 3D printing of personalised souvenirs, to enhance  
31 visitors' experiences.  
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34 In the first of two practitioner papers in this special issue, Guenther Botschen, Josef Bernhart  
35 and Kurt Promberger Brand-driven Identity Development of Places" (BIDP) approach  
36 provides a structured three phases model that can serve as a practical guide for the  
37 development of places. BIDP is a circular three phase model starting with the definition of  
38 the intended place brand identity, which in phase two becomes translated into concrete touch  
39 point experiences along the main constituents of the place, finally materialising into the new  
40 place format. This article exemplifies the way this model works in practice through the  
41 presentation of a case study where the BIDP approach was implemented in the City of  
42 Innsbruck, although the authors also consider how such an action research approach could be  
43 taken to create a refreshed brand driven identity for the resort of Arillas in Corfu, the place  
44 about which the final paper in this special issue relates.  
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47 Alexandros Christou has established Green Corfu, an alternative holiday tourism portal and  
48 tour operator in the resort of Arillas. His article presents examples of a range of much less  
49 formally implemented place-making initiatives occurring in the resort that have been enabled  
50 by a range of local organisations reacting in a bottom-up way to improve the tourism  
51 infrastructure and services, and which have been provided in a direct response to two key  
52 issues: The economic crisis that has had a particularly hard effect on Greece; and the demise  
53 of mass "sea and sun" tourism to Corfu that had been one of the first of the Greek islands to  
54 be developed for tourism by UK package holiday companies in the 1980s. This article also  
55 evidences the positive results of these initiatives to not only physical place-making, but also  
56 to community empowerment and engagement, and civic pride among the local community.  
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