



**ATLAS Annual Conference 2025**  
**Tourist destinations at a crossroads**  
**Space, community, products, politics and evolutionary processes**  
**in the age of transitions**  
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**ABSTRACT BOOK**



# UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Departament de Recerca  
i Universitats**



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# INTRODUCTION

## **Tourist destinations at a crossroads: Space, community, products, politics and evolutionary processes in the age of transitions**

This conference aims at hosting wide-ranging scientific contributions and debates on the way tourist destinations, its geographies, products, communities and policy approaches have evolved and could evolve under the pull of global and local change drivers and how they need to adapt to such changes.

It means to address such questions as:

- How do we analyse and make sense of tourist places as dynamic, evolving entities?
- How organisational and production processes shaping destination evolution adapt to global change drivers?
- What is the role of local communities of residents, workers and entrepreneurs, in confronting, adapting to or facilitating change?
- How are politics and policies of tourism promotion and development constructed between different scales and agencies? How do we understand and qualify destination resilience?
- What is the role of new technologies and digital worlds in bringing about more sustainable tourism and more resilient destinations?
- What has changed in post-pandemic tourism mobilities, and how does that challenge or accommodate the need for sustainability transitions?
- How are changes in tourism mobilities and spatial behaviour of visitors at and towards destinations influencing destination development?

As the world enters the third decade of the twenty-first century, tourism destinations are, perhaps more than ever before, in a crossroads. Global dynamics of economic, social and environmental transformation caused by climate change and the de-carbonization of economic activity in response to the environmental emergency have opened up new challenges for tourism destinations, while also intensifying other that were already latent. This conference aims to contextualize the evolution of tourism destinations within broad vectors of interpretation, including vulnerability, adaptability and resilience and intense change dynamics such as the effects on the destinations of the current global economic transition. Such dynamics, to which we can add the emergency situation and global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, unveil new additional vulnerabilities in destinations, necessitating new governance mechanisms to increase their resilience (Brouder, 2020; Gössling et al, 2020). This situates the proposal within the core of debates on globalization effects and their limitations at different scales and the vulnerability of complex destinations facing global changes and new economic transition strategies. It also connects the project to current challenges identified by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

According to Hall (2019) this situation brings the need “to rethink human–environment relations given the mistaken belief that the exertion of more effort and greater efficiency will alone solve problems of sustainable tourism”. Following Brouder (2000) “a path that leads to transformation in tourism can be realized if sufficient institutional innovation occurs on both the demand and supply side of tourism that can foster the emergence of new paths.” To do so, there is the need to investigate how tourism and especially, tourism destinations, are able to adapt (or in which cases they are not) to the present era of social, economic and environmental transformations. To advance in this direction, an important question to reflect on is how tourism destinations could respond to this global, intense and transversal transformation clearly driven by the new low-carbon imperative. Tourism destinations are, in fact, in the forefront of the challenge (Prideaux et al, 2020) either as generators of carbon footprint and as places affected by the social, economic and entrepreneurial change trends deriving from the low carbon transition. Following Gössling et al (2020), then, this conference will analyse challenges, vulnerabilities, adaptability and transformations in particular tourism destinations and explores the

foremost role that agency-driven tools in digital technology, communication and governance domains may play in building sustainable, prosperous and resilient tourism destinations.

As stated by Colchester (2016), “adaptive systems are those that are governed by some control or regulatory mechanism that allows them to change their state in response to changes within their environment”. They are interconnected and interdependent, creating a continuously changing environment including reactive and proactive capacities that generate a continuous trade-off between stability and flexibility. In regional studies, this means “the ability of a region to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disturbance” (Foster, 2012, 29). The challenge for a destination is, thus, to set up governance tools in a context of constant change and learning, becoming resilience-oriented when thinking, preparing, acting, governing and performing (Fabry & Zeghni, 2019). As such, adaptability is a continuous process that from an evolutionary perspective must continually involve all destination stakeholders in a complex dynamic that includes societal change. This is truly important as, when dealing with vulnerability and adaptability, Short-, medium- and long-term destination evolution, transformation and resilience depends on the response to the identified challenges. Human agency, context (institutional, geographical and economic) and place path dependence play a role in the definition of co-evolutionary dynamics of destinations and the lock in/out towards new scenarios. Path plasticity, incremental change and path creation, as disruptive transformations, shape the adaptive capacity and resilience of existing complex tourism destinations (Clivaz et al, 2014).

Importantly, destinations are understood as complex places with residential, productive, and social functions beyond tourism; all with co-evolving trajectories. The institutional environment and, by extension, the overall political orientation of the destination will thus influence its social dynamics and productive, social, and ideological relationships. This necessitates a nuanced understanding of the agency tools that destinations put in place in the technological, communication and governance domains that may produce substantial variations as regards its vulnerability and resilience. Empirical observations, theoretical discussions, critical insights and practical expertise could assist a responsible transition towards a sustainable transformation and increase resilience of destinations in the current social, economic and environmental scenario.

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# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Tourist destinations at a crossroads: Space, community, products, politics and evolutionary processes in the age of transitions .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKERS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Thiago Allis .....	15
Scott Cohen .....	15
Ulrike Gretzel .....	16
<b>Industry-Policy Round Table.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Octavi Bono i Gispert .....	18
Choni Fernández .....	19
Damià Serrano .....	19
<b>BIOSKETCHES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ABSTRACTS.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<i>Pay-What-You-Wish Pricing Model in Designing the Cultural Institution of the Future .....</i>	<i>54</i>
Anna Abelson .....	54
Olena Ciftci .....	54
<i>Residents' Attitudes Toward the Saudi Arabian Formula 1 and Its Socio-Cultural Impacts.....</i>	<i>55</i>
Wael Albogami.....	55
<i>Use and rejection of technology in nature-based and cultural tourism visitor experiences .....</i>	<i>56</i>
Julia N. Albrecht.....	56
Stu Hayes .....	56
Naji Gharibi .....	56
<i>Cultural festivals: a new opportunity to discover the Italian territory .....</i>	<i>57</i>
Giulia Alonzo.....	57
Oliviero Ponte di Pino .....	57
<i>Hosting along with increasing restrictions: an ethnographic study of Airbnb hosts in Amsterdam and Barcelona .....</i>	<i>58</i>
Mar Alsina Folch .....	58
Maartje Roelofsen.....	58
Lluís Garay Tamajon .....	58
<i>Ambition or folly: Re-assessing World Heritage policy and tourism in the Anthropocene .....</i>	<i>58</i>
Bailey Ashton Adie.....	58
<i>Promoting cultural heritage among university students: the Ambassadors program .....</i>	<i>59</i>
Silvia Aulet .....	59
Dolors Vidal.....	59
Silvia Grau .....	59
<i>The Implementation of the Delos Initiative (IUCN) in Montsant Natural Park: Preserving Protected Areas Through Nature's Spiritual Values.....</i>	<i>60</i>
Silvia Aulet.....	60
Montserrat Sola .....	60
Ricard Fernández .....	60
<i>Storytelling Power in Tourism Advertising: Enhancing Destination Image and Reducing Perceived Risk .....</i>	<i>61</i>
Yasmin Babalou.....	61
Amirhossein Maleki.....	61

<b><i>Carnivals stimulating collective effervescence and place identity in the Anthropocene .....</i></b>	<b>62</b>
Fiona Eva Bakas .....	62
Stella Kladou .....	62
Maria Psimouli .....	62
<b><i>Participatory mapping for cultural tourism: the landscape observatory of Fiastra Valley, Italy .....</i></b>	<b>63</b>
Benedetta Baldassarre .....	63
Claudia de Luca .....	63
Matteo Giacomelli .....	63
Simona Bravaglieri .....	63
<b><i>Blue Tourism and Climate Change: Building Resilience in Mediterranean Coastal Destinations.....</i></b>	<b>64</b>
Giulia Balestracci .....	64
<b><i>Homo Ludens Performing Sameness in the Age of Originality: The Leaning Tower of Pisa as a Stage for Transient Tourist Heritage .....</i></b>	<b>65</b>
Nika Balomenou .....	65
F. Boy .....	65
Brian Garrod .....	65
A. Kyparissis .....	65
N. Micallef .....	65
J. Morgan .....	65
A. Panayiotopoulos .....	65
<b><i>Mainstreaming Visual Research in Tourism Studies: Ethical Frameworks and Criteria for Research Efficacy .....</i></b>	<b>66</b>
Nika Balomenou .....	66
Brian Garrod .....	66
Peter Burns .....	66
Aggelos Panayiotopoulos .....	66
Stefanie Benjamin .....	66
Robert Bowen .....	66
Carl Cater .....	66
Melissa Cummings .....	66
Pheroza Daruwalla .....	66
Karen Davies .....	66
Johan Edelheim .....	66
Joanne Edney .....	66
William Feighery .....	66
Sarah Frankel .....	66
Francesc Fusté-Forné .....	66
Allan Jepson .....	66
Simon Kimber .....	66
Maggie Miller .....	66
Sabina Owsianowska .....	66
André Riani Costa Perinotto .....	66
Felicity Picken .....	66
Heather Skinner .....	66
Sarah Snell .....	66
Louise Todd .....	66
Nina Willment .....	66
Theres Winter .....	66
Isabella Ye .....	66
<b><i>Assessing The Sustainability Practices of The Camino Francés Through Visual Ethnographic Methods .....</i></b>	<b>67</b>
Christopher Aaron Barnes .....	67
<b><i>Bridging the Gap to Greener Tourism: Individual Barriers to Sustainable Transport Choices .....</i></b>	<b>68</b>
Jana Bartová .....	68
Markéta Novotná .....	68
<b><i>On the relationship of locals with sea turtles on Providence Island, Colombia .....</i></b>	<b>69</b>
Daniel Calderón Ramírez .....	69

<b><i>Tourism and Liveable Cities: a Scoping Review</i></b> .....	<b>70</b>
Melese Belay .....	70
Cristina Maxim .....	70
Alexandros Paraskevas .....	70
<b><i>How large is the destination system of Venice? A big data approach</i></b> .....	<b>71</b>
Dario Bertocchi .....	71
<b><i>Development of Sustainable Wine Tourism: Evaluating Economic, Social, and Environmental Impacts on Rural Local Communities</i></b> .....	<b>71</b>
Darya Boronilo .....	71
<b><i>Why pay? Understanding visitor compliance with user-fee models in open access contexts</i></b> .....	<b>72</b>
Jana Brehmer .....	72
Tobias Heldt .....	72
Peter Fredman .....	72
<b><i>Stranded Refugees in Portuguese Tourist Destinations during WWII</i></b> .....	<b>73</b>
Marisa de Brito .....	73
Herminia Sol .....	73
<b><i>Systems thinking to understand tourism destination climate action</i></b> .....	<b>74</b>
Elisa Burrai .....	74
Kyriaki Glyptou .....	74
Jane Turner .....	74
Chris Cooper .....	74
<b><i>Degrowth, growth and the democratisation of tourism development</i></b> .....	<b>75</b>
Jim Butcher .....	75
<b><i>Gen Z's and Their Intention to Participate in Regenerative Activities at Aalborg Carnival</i></b> .....	<b>76</b>
Mark Castañeda .....	76
Al Mamun .....	76
Israt Jahan Mumu .....	76
<b><i>The Contested Role of Volunteerism in Cultural Events: Building a Sustainable Event Legacy</i></b> .....	<b>76</b>
Luigi Cernigliaro .....	76
<b><i>Social media and mountain visitation – is this ‘friendship’ sustainable?</i></b> .....	<b>77</b>
Siya Cholakova .....	77
Elka Dogramadjieva .....	77
<b><i>The health implications of touristification</i></b> .....	<b>78</b>
Agustín Cocola-Gant .....	78
<b><i>Beyond the Binary in Event Management Research</i></b> .....	<b>78</b>
Willem Coetzee .....	78
<b><i>Exploring the Role of Festivals and Leisure Events in Advancing Social Sustainability</i></b> .....	<b>79</b>
Alba Colombo .....	79
<b><i>Nature-Based Tourism Risks: Visitor Behaviors and Perceptions in the PNPG</i></b> .....	<b>80</b>
Elizabeth Couto .....	80
Goretti Silva .....	80
<b><i>Housekeeping as choreography? Exploring the ebb and flow of rhythms in housekeeping work</i></b> .....	<b>81</b>
Tara Duncan .....	81
Maria Thulemark .....	81
Susanna Heldt Cassel .....	81
<b><i>Analysis of green and digital skills needs in the European tourism industry</i></b> .....	<b>81</b>
Laia Encinar-Prat .....	81
Patricia Peralta Lasso .....	81
<b><i>Determining the optimal tourist tax scenario through a Best-Worst Method</i></b> .....	<b>82</b>
Stefania Denise Escobar .....	82

<b>Regional Seasonality of cruise destinations .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Josep Maria Espinet Rius .....	83
Antonio García-Sánchez .....	83
Ariadna Gassiot-Melian .....	83
<b>Using traditional foodways for stimulating regenerative development of mountain communities.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Carlos Fernandes .....	83
Goretti Silva .....	83
Alexandra I. Correia .....	83
Susana Rachão .....	83
<b>The Advertising Image of Craftsmanship in Rural Areas as a Tourism Incentive: The Case of Asturias (Spain).....</b>	<b>84</b>
Ana María Fernández García .....	84
Llara Fuente Corripio .....	84
<b>Beyond Growth: Post-Growth Narratives through New Materialism and Post-Humanism in Tourism Storytelling .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Natalia Ferrer Roca .....	85
<b>A Critical Discourse Analysis of academic mobility among Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and PhD's students in Tourism Studies in Sweden .....</b>	<b>86</b>
Clotilde Formica .....	86
Ioanna Farsari .....	86
<b>Social inclusion and cohesion through cultural events: A decade of European Capitals of Culture ....</b>	<b>87</b>
Marisa Fragoso .....	87
Ana Gonçalves .....	87
Eduardo Brito-Henriques .....	87
<b>Tourism and inequality within destinations.....</b>	<b>88</b>
Fabian Frenzel .....	88
<b>The Paradigm of the Circular Economy in Tourism – An ethico-philosophical critique .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Matthias Fuchs .....	88
Ralf Lüfter .....	88
<b>Vitality of Margins: El Cubo Verde and Strategies for Cultural/Creative Tourism Cohesion .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Llara Fuente Corripio .....	89
Renata Scalzer Ribeiro .....	89
<b>Co-Assessing Segittur's Smart Tourism Destinations Indicator System to Measure Resilience.....</b>	<b>90</b>
Oriol Gallardo .....	90
Aaron Gutiérrez .....	90
Salvador Anton Clavé .....	90
<b>Advancing a Model for Sustainable Cultural Tourism: The Ibero-American Cultural Routes Programme .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Maria Laura Gasparini .....	91
<b>Advancing Sustainability for cultural festivals: Balancing Global Appeal and Community-Centric Approaches .....</b>	<b>92</b>
Vasiliki Georgoula .....	92
<b>Multicultural festivals, belonging and identity: The case of Glasgow Mela .....</b>	<b>92</b>
David McGillivray .....	92
Gayle McPherson .....	92
<b>Will degrowing Airbnb be enough? Rental property owner and alternative rent extraction strategies in Venice historical center .....</b>	<b>94</b>
Emanuele Giordano .....	94
<b>The Role of Destination Management in Enhancing Competitiveness: Insights from Developing Countries .....</b>	<b>94</b>
Gianluca Goffi .....	94
Marco Cucculelli .....	94
Brian King .....	94



<b>Liveability and city branding: comparing Monocle's and The economist's liveable cities rankings .....</b>	<b>95</b>
Sara Góis .....	95
Eduardo Brito-Henriques .....	95
<b>Unravelling audiovisual communication of destinations through visual analysis .....</b>	<b>96</b>
Sara Góis .....	96
Eduardo Brito-Henriques .....	96
<b>How smart are destinations? (Results of a Hungarian research) .....</b>	<b>97</b>
Tibor Gonda .....	97
Zoltán Raffay .....	97
<b>Detaching from precarious labour amidst the exhaustion of the tourist city .....</b>	<b>97</b>
Alejandro González Domingo .....	97
<b>On the making of a self-diagnosing tool for tourism business vulnerability to climate change .....</b>	<b>98</b>
Alejandro González Domingo .....	98
Gonzalo Gamboa .....	98
<b>Narratives between Culture and Nature. Cultural Facilitation/ Education in the Anthropocene.....</b>	<b>99</b>
Barbara Grabher .....	99
<b>Luxury Heritage Brands &amp; Cultural Routes .....</b>	<b>100</b>
Manuela Graf .....	100
<b>Heritage Tourism and music: The case of Opera Houses through qualitative research.....</b>	<b>100</b>
Adrian Guachalla .....	101
<b>Unlikely models? Rethinking tourism governance for overtourism prevention via emerging contexts .....</b>	<b>101</b>
Carlo Guadagno .....	101
<b>Crossing boundaries and boundary crossing: sustainable scenarios for the African South? .....</b>	<b>102</b>
Karen Harris .....	102
Hannes Engelbrecht .....	102
Charlene Herselman .....	102
<b>Story tellers – telling stories: Invigorating the southern African touristic story-scape .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Karen Harris .....	103
CR Botha .....	103
<b>Designing transition arenas to accelerate sustainability transition in the visitor economy .....</b>	<b>104</b>
Stefan Hartman .....	104
Jasper Heslinga .....	104
<b>Rethinking tourism destination management: Post-COVID-19 strategies inspired by Borobudur, Indonesia .....</b>	<b>105</b>
Jasper Heslinga .....	105
<b>Ageing in the tourist city: when tourism brings urban living to a standstill.....</b>	<b>105</b>
Wilbert den Hoed .....	105
<b>Applying Customer Experience Redesign to Creative Tourism Development .....</b>	<b>106</b>
Endre Horvath .....	106
<b>‘Marie and Stefan’s Photo Album’: Interactive Storytelling Technology at the Maczek Memorial .....</b>	<b>107</b>
Moniek Hover .....	107
Juriaan van Waalwijk .....	107
<b>Tourism decision-making processes among Chinese Generation Z.....</b>	<b>108</b>
Lingling Huang .....	108
Maria Lexhagen .....	108
Serena Volo .....	108
<b>Tourists’ perceptions of glacier tourism: a comparative analysis of Instagram’s visuals.....</b>	<b>109</b>
Lingling Huang .....	109
Irene Pinto .....	109
Serena Volo .....	109

<b><i>From Growth Management to Degrowth in Tourism: Navigating Contradictions .....</i></b>	<b>110</b>
Dimitri Ioannides .....	110
Alessia Mariotti .....	110
<b><i>Empowering local communities through participatory approaches: cultural tourism and education in Urbina – Carchi, Ecuador .....</i></b>	<b>111</b>
Jaime Iturralde .....	111
Wladimir Andrade .....	111
<b><i>Cultural and creative tourism business models: a comparative analysis of sustainability issues.....</i></b>	<b>112</b>
Laura James .....	112
Henrik Halkier .....	112
<b><i>Exploring the Role of Fascinating Natural Landscapes in Recreation and Tourism Design .....</i></b>	<b>112</b>
Kelsey Johansen .....	112
<b><i>Changes in short-term rentals in CEE: The case of Airbnb in Lodz .....</i></b>	<b>113</b>
Karolina Kacprzak.....	113
<b><i>Cultural activity and creative strategies in tourism-driven economies: exploring the potential of Samos .....</i></b>	<b>114</b>
Nicholas Karachalis .....	114
Anna Kyriakaki .....	114
Vasiliki Georgoula.....	114
<b><i>Tourist city mobilities: examining visitor-resident interactions and perceived impacts in Barcelona</i></b>	<b>114</b>
Anna Kazakova.....	114
Xavier Delclòs Alió.....	114
Aaron Gutiérrez .....	114
<b><i>Reviving Colonial Heritage, Marginalizing Indigenous Memory: UNESCO’s Designation of Moravian Settlements in Bethlehem, PA, USA .....</i></b>	<b>115</b>
Akbar Keshodkar .....	115
<b><i>Evaluating International Tourists’ Perceptions of Phuket Beaches Through Online Reviews .....</i></b>	<b>116</b>
Krittabhas Khwanyuen.....	116
Nichapat Sangkaew .....	116
<b><i>Transforming Tourism? Potential and Struggles of European Cities.....</i></b>	<b>117</b>
Ko Koens .....	117
Clare Inkson.....	117
Cristina Maxim .....	117
Shirley Nieuwland.....	117
Ilaria Pappalepore.....	117
Eva de Smedt .....	117
Bert Smit .....	117
Luc van den Boogaart.....	117
<b><i>Visiting Friends and Relatives Travel Induced by Padua’s Student Community .....</i></b>	<b>118</b>
Elmira Laleh.....	118
Nicola Orio .....	118
<b><i>Tourism’s roles in overcoming the story of separation toward more livable futures .....</i></b>	<b>119</b>
Stefan Lazic .....	119
Loretta Bellato.....	119
<b><i>Promoting Sustainable Sporting Events for Sustainable Destinations: A Demand-Side Perspective</i></b>	<b>120</b>
Miha Lesjak.....	120
Emil Juvan .....	120
Eva Podovšovnik .....	120
<b><i>Mapping the Research Ecosystem on Gender-Sensitive Urban Mobility Planning: a fragmented network .....</i></b>	<b>121</b>
Alba López Ortiz .....	121
Benito Zaragozaí .....	121
Wilbert den Hoed .....	121

<b><i>How to continue to survive on the World Heritage List in urban destinations? A transatlantic look of the challenges of belonging to UNESCO.</i></b>	<b>121</b>
Silvia María López Ruiz	121
<b><i>Role of sensory experience in memorialisation: visitors' perspective from Auschwitz-Birkenau</i></b>	<b>122</b>
Jozef Lopuch	122
<b><i>Magical realities: Reconceptualising everyday magic in tourism spaces</i></b>	<b>123</b>
Jane Lovell	123
Nitasha Sharma	123
<b><i>Cross-border collaboration in cultural tourism: the role of proximities and border-crossing practices</i></b>	<b>124</b>
Anna Luna Lind	124
Laura James	124
Anette Therkelsen	124
<b><i>Co-creating Resistance: Participatory Filmmaking and Local Narratives Against Mass Tourism in the Cinque Terre and Venice</i></b>	<b>124</b>
Nick Mai	124
<b><i>Who let dogs in? Conflicting narratives in dog-friendly tourism and leisure initiatives</i></b>	<b>125</b>
Maria Månsson	125
<b><i>Destination image semiotics: Impact of cultural differences and stereotypes in domestic tourism</i></b>	<b>126</b>
Estela Marine-Roig	126
Serena Volo	126
Serena Lonardi	126
<b><i>Representing Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Instagrammable Destination</i></b>	<b>127</b>
Lénia Marques	127
Outi Niininen	127
Eda Kop	127
Jay Lee	127
Clare d'Souza	127
<b><i>Determinants of Tourists' Transport Mode Choice to Access the High-Speed Rail Station at Camp de Tarragona</i></b>	<b>127</b>
Maria E. Medina-Chavarria	127
Daniel Miravet	127
Aaron Gutiérrez	127
<b><i>The Spatiotemporal Concentration of Cruise Passengers in Barcelona: An Analysis of Mobility Patterns Through GPS Data</i></b>	<b>128</b>
Veronica Mejia	128
Aaron Gutiérrez	128
Xavier Delclòs-Alió	128
<b><i>"Liveability" in a Medium-Sized City Destination: Trier's Experience with High Tourist Intensity</i></b>	<b>129</b>
Michael Mießner	129
<b><i>Beyond the glass: Can aquarium diving foster emotional connections and inspire environmental care?</i></b>	<b>130</b>
Francesca Milan	130
Serena Lucrezi	130
<b><i>Invisible workers within the tourism labour force</i></b>	<b>131</b>
Claudio Milano	131
<b><i>Tourist mobility patterns in urban destinations: the role of mobility intensity in Barcelona</i></b>	<b>132</b>
Daniel Miravet Arnau	132
Michele Terraferma	132
Aaron Gutiérrez	132
<b><i>Measuring Sustainability in Hotels: A Practical Tool Based on International Standards</i></b>	<b>133</b>
Daissy Moya	133
Joaquim Majó	133

<b>Contested Heritage and Conflict of Narratives.....</b>	<b>134</b>
Rajesh Nautiyal.....	134
<b>Exploring the Synergy Between Film and Heritage at Cinematheque Passion .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Chin Ee Ong .....	135
Orson Wong.....	135
<b>How arts, festivals and their online solutions generate rural development.....</b>	<b>135</b>
Natalia Oszko Jakab .....	135
<b>Accessible tourism labels: European Union perspective .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Hana Paleka .....	135
Jelena Đurkin Badurina .....	135
Daniela Soldić Frleta.....	135
<b>Hotel Industry's Instagram Iconography: The Visual Codes of Seaside versus Mountainous Resorts</b>	<b>136</b>
Eirini Papadaki.....	136
<b>Social Cohesion and Sustainability in Traditional Music Festivals in Crete.....</b>	<b>137</b>
Eirini Papadaki.....	137
Eleftheria Vassilaki .....	137
<b>Addressing Governance Complexities: Insights from Stakeholders on Adaptive Strategies during Transitions in the Ebro Delta Destination .....</b>	<b>138</b>
Ana Pastor Alcaraz .....	138
Isabel Paulino .....	138
<b>Exploring Sustainable De-growth in Marine and Coastal Tourism: Perspectives of Socio-ecological Stakeholders in Malaysia.....</b>	<b>139</b>
Isabel Paulino .....	139
Nadzirah Hosen .....	139
Amran Hamzah.....	139
<b>AR in heritage sites: a catalyst for tourism development in peripheral areas.....</b>	<b>140</b>
Irene Pinto.....	140
Bibiana León .....	140
Assumpció Huertas.....	140
<b>Inclusive Eventscapes: Using emotional-spatial mapping to interpret ultramarathon event experiences .....</b>	<b>141</b>
Jess Porritt Best.....	141
<b>Contrary Pulling Forces or Aligned Pushing Power in visits promotion? DMO's Vs. Local Tours .....</b>	<b>141</b>
Lluís Prats .....	141
Isabel Paulino .....	141
<b>Next Generation Zoos preserving Planet Earth? The ranger as storyteller. ....</b>	<b>142</b>
Wesley Put-van den Beemt .....	142
Moniek Hover.....	142
Juriaan van Waalwijk .....	142
<b>Perceived Animal Welfare in Animal-themed parks from Social Media: The Case of Chimelong .....</b>	<b>143</b>
Shanshan Qi .....	143
<b>Grindr and sex as leisure in tourism .....</b>	<b>144</b>
Xudong Qiu .....	144
Scott Cohen .....	144
Jonathan Skinner .....	144
<b>Supporting, sustaining, connecting: how cultural festivals contribute to socio-cultural infrastructures .....</b>	<b>145</b>
Bernadette Quinn.....	145
<b>Exploring Visitor Emotions and Enduring Involvement at Dark Tourism Sites Using Biometric Technologies.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Inclusive destinations – real accessibility beyond words.....</b>	<b>146</b>
Zoltán Raffay .....	146
Tibor Gonda .....	146

<b><i>The Readiness of Tourism and Creative Industry Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in adopting the Circular Economy Approach: A Case Study Bukit Dewi Manggung SMEs</i></b> .....	<b>147</b>
Teges Ratna Ayu Ningrum .....	147
<b><i>Tourism Destinations and Dementia-Friendly Communities: An Exploratory Study</i></b> .....	<b>148</b>
Sandra Rebelo .....	148
Ana Gonçalves .....	148
Miguel Padeiro .....	148
Paulo Morgado .....	148
<b><i>Exploring Tourists' Reflections on Interactions with Senior Residents at Destinations</i></b> .....	<b>149</b>
Nafiseh Rezaei .....	149
<b><i>From the centre to the periphery: Developments in cultural tourism research</i></b> .....	<b>150</b>
Greg Richards .....	150
<b><i>More-than-human accessibility: Assistance dogs as tourists and workers</i></b> .....	<b>150</b>
Jillian Rickly .....	150
<b><i>System Dynamic Model of Tourism Platformisation Effects on Tourism Working Conditions</i></b> .....	<b>151</b>
Blaž Rodič .....	151
Maja Turnšek .....	151
Maja Breznik .....	151
Jerneja Šavrič .....	151
<b><i>The Role of Visibility in Performances of Emotional Labor in Hospitality Spaces</i></b> .....	<b>152</b>
Eleonora Rossi .....	152
<b><i>The European Capital of Culture as a Marketing Mega-Event: The Challenge of Getting Nominated</i></b> .	<b>153</b>
Wawrzyniec Rudolf .....	153
Elham Cheraghi .....	153
Marta Olasik .....	153
<b><i>Discourses and positionings around degrowth among European destination stakeholders</i></b> .....	<b>154</b>
Antonio Russo .....	154
Ana Pastor Alcaraz .....	154
Andrea Ganzaroli .....	154
<b><i>Digitalization in Cultural Heritage Destinations in Times of War: A Tourism Revival Plan</i></b> .....	<b>155</b>
Hanine El Sahili .....	155
<b><i>Intangible cultural heritage and climate change: Adaptation measures for Human Tower exhibitions in tourist destinations</i></b> .....	<b>155</b>
Òscar Saladié .....	155
Júlia Sevil .....	155
Jon Xavier Olano Pozo .....	155
Anna Boqué-Ciurana .....	155
<b><i>The role of narrative in the social construction processes and interpretation of World Heritage Sites</i></b> .....	<b>156</b>
Maria Carla Saliu .....	156
Ivan Blečić .....	156
Salvador Anton Clavé .....	156
<b><i>Framing ethics and identity in dark tourism and volunteer tourism: A social media perspective</i></b> .....	<b>157</b>
Marta Salvador-Almela .....	157
Craig Wight .....	157
<b><i>Tourism's Unequal Footprint: Geospatial Insights into Tourism and Local Wealth</i></b> .....	<b>157</b>
Nichapat Sangkaew .....	157
Chayanon Phucharoen .....	157
Aziz Nanthaamornphong .....	157
<b><i>Agency and coevolutionary path development in tourism destinations. Lessons from Mexico</i></b> .....	<b>158</b>
Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez .....	158
Carlos Gauna .....	158
Salvador Anton Clavé .....	158
Alfonso Zepeda Arce .....	158

<b>Restaurant Revenue Management Practices in Johannesburg, South Africa .....</b>	<b>159</b>
Erica Sao Joao .....	159
Dikeledi Comfort Ngwetjana .....	159
<b>Cross-Border Collaboration for Circular Tourism Economy: A Critical Review of the Mediterranean .....</b>	<b>160</b>
Angelo Sciacca .....	160
Constantia Anastasiadou .....	160
<b>Contested authenticity: navigating local identity, tourism, and heritage in Edinburgh .....</b>	<b>161</b>
Matea Senkic .....	161
<b>Festivals and Legacies of the Sea: SDG development in Sainte Luce, Madagascar .....</b>	<b>161</b>
Jonathan Skinner .....	161
<b>Anticipating regenerative tourism futures: A process-based systems approach to tourism transition in the Westhoek (Flanders, Belgium).....</b>	<b>162</b>
Eva De Smedt .....	162
Justine Bauters .....	162
<b>The role of city parks in creating wellbeing-related liveability .....</b>	<b>163</b>
Melanie Smith .....	163
Joanna Kowalczyk-Anioł .....	163
<b>The role of leisure, culture and tourism in smart living .....</b>	<b>163</b>
Melanie Smith .....	163
Songling Chang .....	163
<b>The economic implications of eudaimonic tourism experiences.....</b>	<b>164</b>
Daniela Soldić Frleta.....	164
Jelena Đurkin Badurina .....	164
<b>Tiles and tales: Writing visitor experiences into Portuguese azulejos.....</b>	<b>165</b>
Ivana Stevic .....	165
Zélia Breda.....	165
<b>‘Touring’ informal green spaces in cities: a multispecies urban justice perspective.....</b>	<b>166</b>
Marianna Strzelecka .....	166
Alberto Amore .....	166
Arash Akhshik .....	166
<b>Negotiating Mobility: Tourist Practices and Spatiotemporal Patterns in Rural China .....</b>	<b>167</b>
Qianfei Su .....	167
<b>Ageing in the old city: tourism-related (im)mobilities of the elderly population of Venice .....</b>	<b>168</b>
Elena Tardivo.....	168
Wilbert den Hoed .....	168
<b>Indigenous gastronomy in contemporary tourism .....</b>	<b>168</b>
Oscar Tiku.....	168
<b>Pursuing responsible tourism: Case study of whale-watching tourism in Ryukyu Islands.....</b>	<b>169</b>
Oscar Tiku.....	169
<b>A view from the street: Children’s visual expressions of tourism imaginaries .....</b>	<b>170</b>
Louise Todd .....	170
Mabel Victoria .....	170
Michael Bowdidge.....	170
<b>Circular Economy in Tourism and Hospitality: A Micro-Meso-Macro Framework for Inter-Disciplinary Research.....</b>	<b>171</b>
Lucia Tomassini .....	171
Rodolfo Baggio .....	171
Ioanna Farsari.....	171
Matthias Fuchs .....	171
Flemming Sørensen .....	171
<b>Posthumanism and animal geography: the case of Freya the walrus on media.....</b>	<b>171</b>
Lucia Tomassini .....	171

<b><i>Rural tourism beyond the Capitalocene: A Posthumanist approach to Post-growth</i></b> .....	<b>172</b>
Marlisa Ayu Trisia .....	172
Lluís Prats .....	172
Jaume Guia.....	172
<b><i>Coevolving path development and coopetition challenges in cross-border Silk Road destinations ..</i></b>	<b>173</b>
Yuliya Tsvilik .....	173
Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez .....	173
Salvador Anton Clavé .....	173
Marcus Herntrei .....	173
<b><i>Adaptive reuse of castles in Slovenia: We might be witnessing a trend of disenchantment with tourism</i></b> .....	<b>174</b>
Maja Turnsek .....	174
Miloš Kosec.....	174
Barbara Lampič .....	174
Metka Dernovšek .....	174
<b><i>Climate change mitigation in tourism: looking for answers in alternative hedonism and limitarianism</i></b> .....	<b>175</b>
Maja Turnsek .....	175
Nejc Pozvek.....	175
<b><i>Sustainable Futures for Island Destinations: Comparative Insights from Hawaii and the Galápagos Archipelagos</i></b> .....	<b>175</b>
Juan Carlos Valdivieso .....	175
Adam Burke .....	175
<b><i>When in Copenhagen, Be Like and With the Locals. Sustainable Lifestyles as a Tourism Resource.</i></b>	<b>176</b>
Jordi Vegas-Macias .....	176
<b><i>Co-Creation and Community Building: The Role of BOCA in Adolescent Cultural Engagement</i></b> .....	<b>177</b>
Marushka Vidovic .....	177
Aileen Morrissey .....	177
Xavier Villanueva .....	177
Maria Victoria Rios.....	177
Maia López .....	177
<b><i>The power of visuals in destination image formation: Exploring climate crisis' effects</i></b> .....	<b>178</b>
Serena Volo .....	178
<b><i>From Culture to Customer Care: Attributes Shaping Tattoo Tourism Experiences</i></b> .....	<b>178</b>
Surarak Wichupankul.....	178
Nichapat Sangkaew .....	178
Chayanon Phucharoen .....	178
<b><i>Generative AI and Robust Educational Practices for Tourism</i></b> .....	<b>179</b>
Angela Wright .....	179
<b><i>Beyond Lovers and Haters: Understanding Resident Perspectives on the Social Impact of Events - The Case of the F1 Dutch Grand Prix</i></b> .....	<b>180</b>
Kristel Zegers.....	180

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



*Thiago Allis*

Thiago Allis holds a PhD in Architecture and Urban Planning from the University of São Paulo (USP) and is associate professor on Leisure and Tourism, at School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities (EACH), at the University of São Paulo. His research interests cover tourism in urban contexts, regional and urban planning and several dimensions of tourism mobilities. In his research projects, he sought a to converge reflections on tourism and mobilities in the perspective of the social sciences (under the umbrella of the New Mobilities Paradigm), by building and applying the so

called mobile methods. He leads the Research Group on Tourism & Mobilities (MobTur), and he is one of the organisers of the School of Advanced Sciences on Mobilities (SPMob), held biennially at USP since 2017.



*Scott Cohen*

Scott Cohen is a Professor of Tourism and Transport with over 20 years of academic experience. He is presently Invited Full Professor at the University of Algarve, Portugal. Scott's research is primarily focused on societal issues in the contexts of travel, mobility and transport, with particular interests in hypermobility, sustainable mobility, autonomous vehicles and in business and lifestyle travel. He publishes regularly across high impact business, social science and environmental science journals. Scott is a Fellow of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism and the International Association for China Tourism Studies.



## Lifestyle mobilities: destination crossroads of tourism, work and migration

*Scott Cohen*

*University of Algarve*

*CinTurs - Research Centre for Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being*

*Portugal*

[sacohen@ualg.pt](mailto:sacohen@ualg.pt)

A decade has passed since lifestyle mobilities entered the academic literature as a conceptual framework to address the grey zone between tourism, work and migration. Lifestyle mobilities emerged from the broader theoretical ideas offered by the mobilities turn in the social sciences, which itself was inspired by post-structural thinking. Post-structural perspectives shun binaries, such as home/away or work/leisure. The rejection of such binaries upends many comfortable divisions in tourism knowledge.

A number of social phenomena reflecting the collapse of these binaries found theoretical traction in lifestyle mobilities, such as long-term backpacking, Vanlife, and more recently, the meteoric rise of digital nomadism. These travel lifestyles are bound together by ongoing and (largely) voluntary corporeal mobility. Ways of life oriented around corporeal mobility have important implications for adherents' senses of identity, belonging and home. Lifestyle mobilities also have important repercussions for visitor destinations, influencing their development and evolution.

This keynote presentation charts the development of lifestyle mobilities, addressing key advances over the last decade. But more importantly, it discusses what we do not yet know and the implications of those gaps for tourist destinations. To that end, a research agenda is offered that would help close some of the remaining knowledge gaps in lifestyle mobilities research.



*Ulrike Gretzel*

Dr. Ulrike Gretzel is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Public Relations, University of Southern California and Director of Research at Netnografica. She also teaches in the Master of Marketing program at the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems in Austria. She received her PhD in Communications from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has held academic positions at Texas A&M University, the University of Wollongong, and the University of Queensland.

Her research spans the design, use, and implications of emerging technologies, ranging from social media and mobile applications to smart cities, robots, and the Metaverse. Her work often intersects with fields such as communication studies, information technology, marketing, and sustainable development, offering insights into the evolving landscape of technology-driven tourism. Examples of research topics Dr. Gretzel has explored include the use of technology to induce mindful tourism experiences, the social media activism of RV travelers and vanlifers, the use and impact of online travel reviews, the role of mobile technology in supporting on-site travel decision-making, and the ways in which technological platforms mediate the efforts of tourism micro-entrepreneurs.

Dr. Gretzel has published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles. Her research has been funded by the US National Science Foundation, the Australian Research Council, the Hong Kong Research Council, the National Research Foundation of Korea, the US National Endowment for the Humanities, the US National Park Service, Parks Canada, TripAdvisor, and national, regional and local tourism

organizations around the globe. She is frequently acknowledged as one of the most cited authors in the fields of tourism and persuasion and is an elected fellow of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism. Her work has been quoted in major news outlets such as the New York Times and The Australian.

She shares information about her research and relevant topics on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ulrike-gretzel/> and X (@UlrikeGretzel).

## **Smart Tourism at a Crossroads**

*Ulrike Gretzel*  
*University of Southern California*  
*United States*  
[gretzel@hotmail.com](mailto:gretzel@hotmail.com)

This keynote address explores the pressing challenges facing smart tourism at a critical crossroads, where the promises of digital transformation collide with escalating global crises. Reflecting on the definition of smart tourism by SEGITTUR—“the innovative integration of cutting-edge technology, accessibility, sustainability, and governance to enhance the tourist experience and improve residents’ quality of life”—the talk examines the widening gap between theory and practice in tourism development. While AI-powered technologies and data-driven tools offer unprecedented opportunities for personalization, efficiency, and resource optimization, their implementation in destinations continues to be hampered by infrastructural limitations, fragmented governance, and a lack of digital literacy. Simultaneously, the tourism sector grapples with mounting issues: unsustainable visitor numbers leading to overtourism, inadequate responses to the ongoing migration crisis that strain local capacities, labor shortages, and intensifying climate change impacts threatening cultural and natural heritage and tourism-based livelihoods. Smart tourism, envisioned as a holistic solution, risks becoming obsolete unless deeply reoriented around systemic change. The keynote critically reflects on how destinations can reimagine smart tourism not just as digital enhancement, but as a transformative framework that balances technological innovation with social justice and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

# Industry-Policy Round Table

## Visions to navigate changes in tourism and paths for destination resilience

This conversation aims to provide visions, practices and interrogations from the experience of highly qualified professionals to the main topic of the conference: It means to address such questions as:

- How organizational, production and service public and private processes are shaping destinations evolution and their adaptation to global change drivers?
- What is the role of new technologies and digital worlds in bringing about more sustainable tourism and more resilient destinations?
- How are changes in tourism mobilities and spatial behaviour of visitors at and towards destinations influencing destination development?
- How should politics and policies of tourism promotion and development adapt to evidenced changes and how they can contribute to destination resilience?
- What is the role of local communities of residents, workers and entrepreneurs, in confronting, adapting to or facilitating change?

### Facilitator:



With over 25 years of experience in destination management and public administration, Octavi Bono is a leading voice in tourism governance. Holding a PhD in Tourism, he has held high-level roles within the Catalan Government, including Director General of Tourism and Executive Vice-President of the Catalan Tourism Board. Throughout his career, he has led transformative initiatives focused on sustainable development and maximizing tourism's economic impact. Today, he continues to contribute his expertise as a senior advisory consultant, supporting tourism strategies in diverse international contexts, with a focus on destination management, policy development, governance, and public-private collaboration.

*Octavi Bono i Gispert*

**Destination Management and Governance. Diputació de Tarragona**

## Participants:

*Choni Fernández*  
**Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability,  
PortAventura World**



Choni Fernández brings over 25 years of experience in national and international corporate environments. A graduate in Economics with a Diploma in Business Administration from the University of Oviedo, she spent 12 years at BASF multinational before joining PortAventura World in 2007. Since then, she has led critical areas including purchasing, logistics, and sustainability, and since 2023, customer management—encompassing Customer Intelligence, CRM, and customer experience. She is responsible for PortAventura's sustainability strategy. Under her leadership, the company earned B Corp certification in 2022. Choni currently chairs the Sustainability Committee of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA-EMEA). She holds a sustainability certification from the NYU Stern School of Business and is part of the LEAP program at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). She was recognized by Bloolooop as one of the 50 most influential people in the global theme park industry in both 2021 and 2022.



Damià Serrano currently serves as Marketing and Research Director at the Catalan Tourism Board (Agència Catalana de Turisme), where he leads strategic efforts to position Catalonia as a global tourism leader. With a PhD in Geography from the University of Barcelona, an MBA in Tourism Business from Canterbury University, and a Tourism Degree from the University of Barcelona, he bridges academic rigor with realworld practical application. Damià has also served as Director of the Barcelona Tourism Observatory and worked extensively as a consultant for destinations and tourism organizations. A professor of Tourism Destination Planning and Place Marketing at institutions such as UB, ESADE, and Tecnológico de Monterrey, he is also a member of the Tourism & Travel Research Association (TTRA) and a Senior Advisor to UN Tourism, reflecting his deep commitment to research, innovation, and sustainable tourism development.

*Damià Serrano*  
**Marketing and Product Development. Tourism Catalan Agency**

## BIOSKETCHES

### **Abelson, Anna**

New York University  
USA

[anna.abelson@nyu.edu](mailto:anna.abelson@nyu.edu)

### **Albogami, Wael**

University of Brighton  
United Kingdom

[w.albogami2@uni.brighton.ac.uk](mailto:w.albogami2@uni.brighton.ac.uk)

### **Albrecht, Julia Nina**

University of Otago  
New Zealand

[julia.albrecht@otago.ac.nz](mailto:julia.albrecht@otago.ac.nz)

Dr Julia N. Albrecht is an Associate Professor in Tourism at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her research interests include tourism destination management for sustainability, visitor management, and nature-based tourism.

### **Aldossari, Saad**

University of South Florida  
USA

[sa24@usf.edu](mailto:sa24@usf.edu)

### **Allis, Thiago**

University of São Paulo (USP)  
Brazil

[thiagoallis@usp.br](mailto:thiagoallis@usp.br)

### **Alsina-Folch, Mar**

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya - UOC  
Spain

[malsinafo@uoc.edu](mailto:malsinafo@uoc.edu)

Mar Alsina Folch holds a Tourism degree with a focus on Destination Planning and Management from Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Catalonia) and a master's in Tourism Destination Development from Dalarna University (Sweden). She is currently a second-year PhD student in the Redintur Interuniversity Doctoral Programme in Tourism at UOC, researching within the NOUTUR group. Her research includes workation, Airbnb hosting practices and coworking spaces in rural areas. Additionally, she has coordinated undergraduate and postgraduate courses as a teaching fellow at UOC and URV.

### **Anastasiadou, Constantia**

Edinburgh Napier University  
United Kingdom

[c.anastasiadou@napier.ac.uk](mailto:c.anastasiadou@napier.ac.uk)

Constantia is Professor in Tourism and Research Lead for Tourism in the Tourism and Intercultural Business Communication Group at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. Her main research interests lay in EU tourism policy, governance and organisational structures; technological mediation processes and circularity in tourism, and cultural/heritage tourism practices and identity. Previous work received funding by the European Union, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK, and the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. Constantia holds a BA Hons in Economics from the University of Macedonia, Greece, and an MSc and PhD in Tourism from University of Strathclyde, UK. Constantia is Professor in Tourism and the Research Lead for Tourism in the Tourism and



Intercultural Business Communication Group at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. Her main research interests lay in EU tourism policy, tourism governance and organisational structures. She is also interested on technological mediation processes and circularity in tourism, and cultural/heritage tourism practices and identity. Her project work has been funded by the EU (TEMPUS programme), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK, and the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. Constantia holds a BA Hons in Economics from the University of Macedonia, Greece and an MSc and PhD in Tourism from University of Strathclyde, UK. She is a committee member of Tourism Society (UK), a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce. Constantia has acted as a scientific committee member and reviewer for several academic conferences and journals including Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Geographies and Event Management.

**Andrade, Wladimir**

Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi  
Ecuador

[esteban.andrade@upec.edu.ec](mailto:esteban.andrade@upec.edu.ec)

Ingeniero en Turismo

Maestría en Turismo mención: Patrimonio y Turismo Comunitario.

Maestría en metodología de la Investigación mención producción científica (cursando)

Docente Universitario

Publicaciones:

- La arriería entre Antonio Ante e Intag para la primera mitad del siglo XX.
- Modelo de gestión para la optimización del recurso humano caso de estudio: Empresa Textil Atuntaqui-Ecuador.
- La Educación Ecuatoriana y su Relación en el Desarrollo Económico Enfocado en la Pobreza y la Desigualdad.

**Ashton Adie, Bailey**

University of Oulu - FUNTS

Finland

[bailey.adie@oulu.fi](mailto:bailey.adie@oulu.fi)

Bailey Ashton Adie is a researcher in the Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu, Finland, where she is part of the Frontiers of Arctic and Global Resilience Research program. She is Chair of the Leisure Studies Association and the co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Heritage Tourism. She also sits on the editorial boards of Tourism Geographies, Tourism Planning & Development, Tourism Management Perspectives, and El Periplo Sustentable. Her research interests include World Heritage, heritage tourism, community resilience, community-based tourism, natural hazards and tourism, tourism and development, second homes, and dark tourism.

**Aulet Serrallonga, Silvia**

University of Girona

Spain

[silvia.aulet@udg.edu](mailto:silvia.aulet@udg.edu)

Teacher and researcher of the Faculty of Tourism of the UdG, coordinator of the Bachelor in Tourism, director of the UNESCO chair in Cultural Policies and Cooperation of the UdG.

**Babalou, Vahideh Yasmin**

Lewis University

USA

[vbabalou@staugustine.lewisu.edu](mailto:vbabalou@staugustine.lewisu.edu)

**Bai, Billy**

University of Nevada Las Vegas  
USA

[billy.bai@unlv.edu](mailto:billy.bai@unlv.edu)

Dr. Billy Bai is Professor and Chair of the Department of Hospitality Management at the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). He served in senior leadership roles, including Associate Dean for Research, Graduate Programs, and International Programs, and held the Sam & Mary Boyd Distinguished Chair Professorship. His extensive research in hospitality and destination marketing, branding, customer loyalty, and technological impacts has led to over 80 journal publications and multiple prestigious awards. He actively engages with industry through workshops, panels, and keynote addresses, and serves on editorial boards of leading hospitality and tourism journals.

**Bakas, Fiona Eva**

IGOT – University of Lisbon  
Portugal

[fionabakas@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:fionabakas@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Fiona Eva Bakas, PhD (2015, Otago University, New Zealand) is a critical tourism researcher and lecturer with international teaching and research experience, currently working as Assistant Professor at the Institute for Geography and Territorial Planning, University of Lisbon, Portugal. Fiona is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Center of Excellence in Food, Tourism & Leisure- Deree, The American College of Greece, a collaborating researcher in the CREATOUR Creative Tourism Observatory, member of TERRITUR Research group and associate member of NGO Equality in Tourism. Her research interests focus on gender in tourism labour, digital tourism work, carnivals, creative tourism, tourism in marginalized areas and qualitative methods. Fiona is Greek/English and lives in an off-grid house in the mountains of Central Portugal.

**Baldassarre, Benedetta**

University of Bologna  
Italy

[benedetta.baldassarre@unibo.it](mailto:benedetta.baldassarre@unibo.it)

Building Engineer and Architect, she obtains a PhD degree in Territorial and Urban Planning in 2025, with a thesis titled "Adaptive cultural tourism in rural areas: a framework to support planners and decision-makers in a changing climate". In 2023 she spent a visiting period at the Wageningen University and Research, collaborating with the subdivision Earth Systems and Global Change and deepening her research on tourism and climate change adaptation. Since 2021 she has been part of the research group "Planning and Regeneration" at the Department of Architecture, University of Bologna. Since 2025 she is also Adjunct Professor of Analysis of Urban and Territorial Systems, at the Department of Civil, Chemical, Environmental, and Materials Engineering, University of Bologna. She is mainly working on cultural tourism and climate change adaptation, cultural landscapes and their resilience against territorial risks, climate change and human health related issues, as well as on urban and rural regeneration, also based on participatory and community-based processes. She is involved in European (RescueME, TRIGGER) and national (QUI Val di Fiastra) research projects.

**Balestracci, Giulia**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[giulia.balestracci@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:giulia.balestracci@estudiants.urv.cat)

**Balomenou, Nika**

Swansea University  
United Kingdom

[nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk)

Nika is an Associate Professor in Tourism and Visual Sociology at the Swansea School of Management. She is co-chair of the Visual Methods in Tourism Research Special Interest Group of

the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research SIG. Her research interests include visual methods and the use of participant-generated images in tourism research with a special focus on host community empowerment.

**Barnes, Christopher Aaron**

Edinburgh Napier University  
United Kingdom

[christopher.barnes@napier.ac.uk](mailto:christopher.barnes@napier.ac.uk)

Christopher A. Barnes is final year Ph.D. candidate and researcher at Edinburgh Napier University, in Edinburgh Scotland. Christopher holds a B.A. (Honours) degree in Tourism Management (2013) and an MSc master's degree, in International Festival & Event Management (2021), and graduated with High Distinction attaining the university medal. Prior to returning to academia - Christopher lived around the world and worked extensively in international conferences & events. Christopher's management experience is within international concert arenas and large-scale convention and international conference venues. He has also worked in five-star luxury events in both Ireland, and the United Kingdom. In early 2022, in collaboration with senior lecturers in collaboration with the British Council and Edinburgh Napier University, Christopher helped create a Sustainability Toolkit for Festivals in Mexico, published online in English/ Spanish. From, 2021-2022, Christopher was also involved in the collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University and The British Council in creating five module chapters for starting a festival. These modules were published online via the British Council India website. In 2023 -2024, he collaborated with Professor Anna Leask and Dr. Louise Todd, as a research assistant, on a project based on the future of Edinburgh Tourism.

**Bartová, Jana**

Masaryk University, FEA  
Czech Republic

[jana.bartova@econ.muni.cz](mailto:jana.bartova@econ.muni.cz)

**Belay, Melese Kebede**

University of West London  
United Kingdom

[melese.belay@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:melese.belay@uwl.ac.uk)

I am originally from Ethiopia. I hold two master's degrees: a Master of Arts in Tourism and Development from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and a Master of Science in Tourism, Society and Environment from Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands. I also worked as both an academic and practitioner for a couple of years in Ethiopia.

Currently, I am pursuing my PhD in Tourism Management at the University of West London in the UK. My research investigates the relationship between tourism and liveable cities discourse in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. This study examines how the government strategically uses urban liveability and quality of life concepts to reconfigure the city center, ultimately aiming to attract foreign tourists, investors, and the Ethiopian diaspora.

**Bellato, Loretta**

Swinburn University  
Australia

[lbellato@swin.edu.au](mailto:lbellato@swin.edu.au)

Loretta Bellato is a settler woman from Melbourne, Australia, and an Adjunct Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology. She is a graduate of the Regenesys Institute Regenerative Practitioner Series, Master of international Development, RMIT and Master of International Sustainable Tourism Management, Monash University. She has extensive practitioner experience in community health and tourism sectors. Loretta is the recipient of the 2024 American Association of Geographers Early Career Researcher award in recognition of her significant contribution to regenerative tourism scholarship. This research was undertaken as part of Loretta's PhD.



**Bertocchi, Dario**  
University of Udine  
Italy  
[dario.bertocchi@uniud.it](mailto:dario.bertocchi@uniud.it)

**Binkhorst, Esther**  
Tip-Top-Tourism  
Spain  
[estherbinkhorst@gmail.com](mailto:estherbinkhorst@gmail.com)

Esther Binkhorst is a specialist in Universal Design, holding a Master's Degree from the Universidad Internacional de Catalunya (UIC) in Spain (2022). She earned her Ph.D. in Experience Design from Tilburg University in the Netherlands (2002) and has a Degree in Consumer Sciences with a focus on tourism and research from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. With extensive professional experience in the hospitality sector, both in academia and business, Esther is also the founder of Tip-Top-Tourism, a platform dedicated to fostering creative, inclusive, and sustainable tourism experience design.

**Bolaños, Dennys**  
Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi  
Ecuador  
[dennys.bolanios@upec.edu.ec](mailto:dennys.bolanios@upec.edu.ec)

Máster en Desarrollo Integral de Destinos Turístico por la Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria  
Máster en Planificación Evaluación de la Educación Superior  
Docente en la carrera de Turismo de la Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi  
Investigador en la línea de inteligencia turística  
Publicado artículos en revistas indexadas y publicados libros sobre turismo  
Ponente en Ecuador, Colombia, México y Chile  
Director de la carrera de Turismo de la UPEC por 5 años

**Bono i Gispert, Octavi**  
Diputació de Tarragona  
Spain

**Boronilo, Darya**  
University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[daryaboronilo916@gmail.com](mailto:daryaboronilo916@gmail.com)

**Brehmer, Jana**  
Dalarna University  
Sweden  
[ibm@du.se](mailto:ibm@du.se)

I am a doctoral student in tourism studies at the Centre for Tourism and Leisure Research at Dalarna University in Borlänge in collaboration with MidSweden University in Östersund. My bachelor's degree was retrieved from the Westcoast University of Applied Science in the North of Germany in International Tourism Management. I completed my master studies in the year 2018 in Tourism Destination Development at Dalarna University.

My current research within CeTLer at Dalarna University focus on tourist compliance behaviour to work towards sustainable and resilient funding systems of recreational trails.

**Brito, Marisa P. de**

Breda University of Applied Sciences

Netherlands

[brito.m@buas.nl](mailto:brito.m@buas.nl)

Dr Marisa de Brito is a senior researcher at the Academy for Leisure and Events (ALE), at Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas) operating within the Places & Flows Research theme. Her research focuses on impacting the quality of places and their communities through sustainable and inclusive development.

With a PhD in Circularity and a Master's degree in Urban Management, both from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, she is a published scholar, and an active member of the International Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) and of the Dutch Centre of Expertise on Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality (CELTH). In addition, she is A Greener Future (AGF) certified international assessor.

**Budoni, Cecilia**

University of Ferrara

Italy

[cecilia.budoni@unife.it](mailto:cecilia.budoni@unife.it)

**Burrai, Elisa**

Leeds Beckett University

United Kingdom

[e.burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:e.burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Dr. Elisa Burrai is a Senior lecturer in the School of Events, Tourism and Hospitality Management at Leeds Beckett University. Elisa's research focuses on the intersection between tourism, responsibility and ethics. Her research interests include interdisciplinary approaches to international development, responsible tourism and tourism ethnographies.

**Butcher, Jim**

Canterbury Christ Church University

United Kingdom

[jim.butcher@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:jim.butcher@canterbury.ac.uk)

Jim Butcher writes and teaches on the geography and politics of tourism. He edits the "Tourism's Horizon: Travel for the Millions" substack.

**Calderón Ramírez, Daniel**

Universidad Externado de Colombia

Colombia

[daniel.calderon@uexternado.edu.co](mailto:daniel.calderon@uexternado.edu.co)

Research professor at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Business Administration. PhD in Territorial Planning and Management. Research topics include planning and management of nature tourism in protected areas. Climate change and risk management in the tourism sector.

**Carlisle, Sheena**

Cardiff University

United Kingdom

[CarlisleS1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:CarlisleS1@cardiff.ac.uk)

**Castañeda, Mark Aldwin**

Aalborg University

Denmark

[markaldwin.castaneda02@gmail.com](mailto:markaldwin.castaneda02@gmail.com)

Mark Aldwin Castañeda is a Master's student in Tourism at Aalborg University, Denmark, with a strong academic foundation in tourism management and business administration. He has experience as a tourism instructor in the Philippines, where he integrated experiential learning and industry case

studies into his teaching. As a student representative at Aalborg University, he advocates for academic excellence and student engagement. His research interests include tourism governance, sustainable tourism, and digital storytelling. Mark's commitment to education, policy analysis, and innovation in tourism positions him as a promising contributor to the field's academic and professional development.

**Castellini, Monia**

University of Ferrara

Italy

[monia.castellini@unife.it](mailto:monia.castellini@unife.it)

**Cernigliaro, Luigi**

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

Italy

[luigi.cernigliaro@santannapisa.it](mailto:luigi.cernigliaro@santannapisa.it)

Currently a PhD candidate at the Institute of Management at Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, Luigi researches sustainability strategies for cultural events and festivals in urban contexts. With experience spanning academia and industry, he applies a research-driven approach to advancing sustainable practices in the events sector. As a sustainability consultant, he designs, implements, and monitors environmental sustainability programmes for major festivals and large-scale live events. Additionally, he has supported the sustainability initiatives of internationally renowned touring artists during their Italian performances.

**Cholakova, Siya**

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Bulgaria

[siya@gea.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:siya@gea.uni-sofia.bg)

**Clavé, Salvador Anton**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[salvador.anton@urv.cat](mailto:salvador.anton@urv.cat)

**Cocola-Gant, Agustín**

IGOT – University of Lisbon

Portugal

[agustincocolagant@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:agustincocolagant@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Agustin Cocola-Gant holds a PhD in Human Geography from Cardiff University and is a Post-doctoral Researcher at the Centre of Geographical Studies, University of Lisbon. He is interested in urban tourism, lifestyle migration and gentrification.

**Coetzee, Willem JL**

Western Sydney University

Australia

[w.coetzee@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:w.coetzee@westernsydney.edu.au)

With three decades of experience in higher education, Willem has devoted himself to tackling social issues in developing nations through international research collaborations and capacity-building grants. He has delivered courses in sustainable tourism, leisure and event management, collaborating closely with regional and local governments to shape effective tourism strategies. Recently, Willem has focused his research on water-stressed destinations, aligning them with SDGs. Additionally, he is exploring attendee experiences at events and the dynamics of LGBTTTQIA+ tourism and events.

**Cohen, Scott**

University of Algarve / University of Surrey  
Portugal / United Kingdom  
[s.cohen@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:s.cohen@surrey.ac.uk)

**Colombo, Alba**

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)  
Spain  
[acolombo@uoc.edu](mailto:acolombo@uoc.edu)

Associate professor at the Arts and Humanities Faculty of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya . She is a researcher with expertise in social impacts, cultural festivals and identity narratives within the frame of Critical Event Studies and Cultural Studies. Her research has been focused on the critical analysis of contemporary significance of cultural events such as traditional and popular festivals, as social and cultural expressions, space of resistance and platform for cultural equality rights. In her research she observed the transformative social capacity of cultural expressions such as festivals and events, and their evolution in the framework of uncertain times. Currently she has been specialized in analysing contemporary events participation (as cultural activities) on the frame of traditional and popular culture in Spain; and on measuring event and festival impacts, from intangible cultural and social ones to rethinking processes and methodologies to evaluate those effects.

**Couto, Elizabeth**

Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo  
Portugal  
[elizabethgoncalves@ipvc.pt](mailto:elizabethgoncalves@ipvc.pt)

PhD in Tourism (Ongoing)

University of Lisbon-IGOT, Portugal

Thesis: "Safety in Nature Tourism in Protected Areas: Challenges and Strategies in Search and Rescue Operations in the Portuguese Context"

Focus: Environmental risks, SAR operations, protected areas management, and tourism safety.

Master's in Tourism, Innovation and Development

Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, 2022

Thesis: Segurança e Gestão de Riscos em Turismo de Natureza e o Contexto de Acidentes no Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês

Bachelor's in Tourism

Instituto Politecnico de Viana do Castelo, 2019

**Delclòs Aliò, Xavier**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[xavier.delclos@urv.cat](mailto:xavier.delclos@urv.cat)

**Demirci, Fatmasu**

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)  
Spain  
[mq195339@uic.es](mailto:mq195339@uic.es)

**Dijkmans, Corné**

Breda University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[Dijkmans.C@buas.nl](mailto:Dijkmans.C@buas.nl)

- Director of Research, Academy for Tourism, Breda University - The Netherlands
- Chair of ATLAS

**Duncan, Tara**

Thompson Rivers University  
Canada

[taduncan@tru.ca](mailto:taduncan@tru.ca)

Tara Duncan is a Professor in Tourism in the Faculty of Adventure Culinary Arts and Tourism at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. Her research focuses on the intersections between mobilities, work and hospitality, with an emphasis on decent and sustainable work. She sits in the editorial boards for Tourism Geographies and Hospitality and Society. She is also the Vice-Chair of ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research) and an elected Board member of the IGU's Tourism Commission.

**Durkin Badurina, Jelena**

University of Rijeka  
Croatia

[jelenad@fthm.hr](mailto:jelenad@fthm.hr)

**Encinar-Prat, Laia**

CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy  
Spain

[laia.encinar@cett.cat](mailto:laia.encinar@cett.cat)

**Escobar, Stefania Denise**

American University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland  
Switzerland

[stefaniadeniseescobar@gmail.com](mailto:stefaniadeniseescobar@gmail.com)

Stefania Denise Escobar is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Economics and Management and affiliated to the Competence Center for Mountain Innovation Ecosystems of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and visiting research at the American University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland (AUS). She holds a PhD in Management and Economics from the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, and her research lies at the intersection of sustainable innovation, smart business ecosystems, tourism management and public sector management. She published research in international journals such as Journal of Knowledge Management, Cities and Current Issues in Tourism.

**Farsari, Ioanna**

Dalarna University  
Sweden

[ifa@du.se](mailto:ifa@du.se)

Ioanna Farsari is Associate Professor at Dalarna University, Sweden. In her research she undertakes a complex adaptive systems perspective in destination governance, development and collaboration for sustainable tourism. She is also interested in education for sustainability, climate change and tourism, and sustainability transformations research. She has long experience on sustainable development projects and she is coordinating the Climate Change and Tourism Research Special Interest Group of ATLAS.

**Fernandes, Carlos de Oliveira**

Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo  
Portugal

[cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt](mailto:cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt)

Carlos Fernandes, Ph.D., is Associate Professor with aggregation in Tourism at the Polytechnic of Viana do Castelo, Portugal. He obtained his undergraduate degree at Syracuse University (USA), Master's at Rutgers University (USA) and Ph.D. at Bournemouth University (UK). His research interests include tourism innovation, tourism as a development strategy, gastronomy, cultural, religious and diaspora tourism. Lectures in the Bachelor's in Tourism and the Master's in Tourism & Innovation. Coordinates the Bachelor's in Gastronomy and Culinary Arts. Researcher at CITUR- Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in Tourism (Portugal).

**Fernández, Choni**  
PortAventura World  
Spain

**Fernández García, Ana María**  
University of Oviedo  
Spain  
[afgarcia@uniovi.es](mailto:afgarcia@uniovi.es)

Full Professor of Art History at the University of Oviedo. She is specialized in artistic relations between Spain and America during contemporary times (art market and artistic emigration), and is currently working on design in Spain and history of furniture, as well as the role of women in architecture and design, among the link between artisan practices and cultural tourism. She has been a visiting researcher at the universities of Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, the Autonomous University of Mexico, Cambridge, Kingston (Modern Interiors Research Center) and Oxford. She obtained five-year research period from the Spanish Ministry. She is director of the magazine Res Mobilis, and has been vice-rector for International Relations and head of the Department of Art History and Musicology.

**Fernández Molinet, Ricard**  
University of Girona  
Spain  
[excursionisme@gdm.cat](mailto:excursionisme@gdm.cat)

**Ferrer Roca, Natàlia**  
University of Girona  
Spain  
[natalia.ferrer@udg.edu](mailto:natalia.ferrer@udg.edu)

Dr. Natàlia Ferrer-Roca, currently serving as a Tenure-Track Serra Húnter Fellow at the University of Girona, holds a PhD from Victoria University of Wellington (NZ), an MA from Westminster University (UK), and a BA from Autonomous University of Barcelona. Her research published encompasses diverse themes, such as cross-border destinations, tourism futures, and destination branding, with a particular emphasis on political economy. Actively engaged in the Virtual Exchange Community of Practice since its inception in 2020, she contributes significantly to the field. Within the university, she holds roles as an academic member of the University Council and collaborator at the ObservatoryforEthicsinAI.

**Folmer, Akke**  
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[akke.folmer@nhlstenden.com](mailto:akke.folmer@nhlstenden.com)

Akke holds a PhD in Cultural Geography, specialising in human-nature relationships. She does research into recreational behaviour, sense of place, nature experiences, and shared prosperity. Her research helps organisations make informed decisions on how to improve the balance between experiencing and protecting nature. Currently Akke is senior researcher at the European Tourism Futures Institute, investigating effects of nudging designs in protected marine environments, and setting up a sustainable tourism monitoring system for the Dutch Wadden Sea area. Furthermore, she is lecturer in tourism geography, and Academic Coordinator of the Master International Leisure, Tourism and Events Management.

**Formica, Clotilde**  
Munster Technological University  
Ireland  
[clotildeformica@gmail.com](mailto:clotildeformica@gmail.com)

Doctoral student at MTU University in Cork, researching the role of Citizen Science in Regenerative Tourism. I previously earned a degree in Tourism Destination Development from Dalarna University in

Sweden, where my thesis titled "Academic Air Travel: What Way Now? Discourses on Academic Mobility among Early-Career Researchers and PhD Students in the Swedish Tourism Field" received the 2024 Award for Best Thesis in Sustainable Development.

**Fragoso, Marisa**

IGOT – University of Lisbon  
Portugal

[marisafragoso@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:marisafragoso@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Marisa Fragoso is a PhD candidate in Tourism and researcher at TERRITUR research group at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, University of Lisbon (IGOT-UL). She holds a Bachelor's degree in Tourism, Leisure, and Heritage from the University of Coimbra and a Master's degree in Tourism and Communication from IGOT-UL and Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies. Additionally, she has completed a Postgraduate course in Economics, Tourism Management and Hotel Management at the Institute of Economics and Management, UL. Her research focuses on creative, sustainable, and inclusive tourism, urban development, tourism policies, place branding and place-making.

**Frenzel, Fabian**

Universität Trier  
Germany

[frenzelf@uni-trier.de](mailto:frenzelf@uni-trier.de)

Fabian Frenzel is Professor of Social Geography of Tourism at Trier University in Germany. His research and teaching connects the fields of mobilities, organisation and politics, with a special focus on inequality.

**Fuchs, Matthias**

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano  
Italy

[matthias.fuchs@unibz.it](mailto:matthias.fuchs@unibz.it)

Matthias Fuchs, Ph.D., is chaired Professor at Free University of Bolzano, Italy and the director of the Competence Center for Sustainable Tourism, Brunico, Italy. His research areas include e-tourism, business intelligence, socio-economic impact analysis, circular economy and critical epistemology. Matthias is Associate Editor of the Journal of Information Technology & Tourism. He serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Travel Research and the Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

**Fuente Corripio, Llara**

University of Oviedo  
Spain

[fuentellara@uniovi.es](mailto:fuentellara@uniovi.es)

**Gallardo Prat, Josep Oriol**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[oriol.gallardo@urv.cat](mailto:oriol.gallardo@urv.cat)

**Gasparini, Maria Laura**

University of Bologna  
Italy

[marialaura.gasparin3@unibo.it](mailto:marialaura.gasparin3@unibo.it)

Researcher in the field of tourism, her main areas of expertise include rural and community-based tourism development, transnational cultural routes and sustainability monitoring. She holds a Master's degree in Tourism Economics and Management from the University of Bologna and a Bachelor's degree in Tourism from the Universidad Nacional de Lanús (Argentina). Member of the Commission of Cultural Experts of the OEI - Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos, and of the Euro-Ibero-



American Alumni Network of the Fundación Yuste. As a researcher at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Tourism (CAST), she has participated in the management of numerous European projects on cultural routes and sustainability indicators in tourism. Currently she is finalising her PhD studies in Economic Geography on the multilevel governance of transnational pilgrimage routes.  
<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/marialaura.gasparin3/cv>

**Gassiot Melian, Ariadna**

University of Girona

Spain

[ariadna.gassiot@udg.edu](mailto:ariadna.gassiot@udg.edu)

Dr. Ariadna Gassiot Melian is a tenure-track lecturer at the Faculty of Tourism and the Department of Business Administration, Management and Product Design, Universitat de Girona. She completed her PhD in 2016, and her research is related to diverse topics, such as accessible tourism, consumer behaviour, cruise tourism and text-mining.

**Georgoula, Vasiliki**

University of the Aegean

Greece

[v.georgoula@aegean.gr](mailto:v.georgoula@aegean.gr)

Vasiliki Georgoula is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Tourism Economics and Management, University of the Aegean and Adjunct Academic Staff at the Hellenic Open University on the field of cultural and event tourism. She teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and she collaborates as a researcher for national and European research projects. She regularly participates in international scientific conferences and has published articles in international scientific journals. She is a reviewer for international scientific journals and a member of scientific and organizing committees in international conferences. Her research and teaching areas focus on the fields of cultural and tourism geography, cultural tourism and sustainability, festival and event management.

**McGillivray, David**

University of the West of Scotland

United Kingdom

[David.McGillivray@uws.ac.uk](mailto:David.McGillivray@uws.ac.uk)

**Giordano, Emanuele**

Université de Toulon

France

[emanuele.giordano@univ-tln.fr](mailto:emanuele.giordano@univ-tln.fr)

**Glyptou, Kyriaki**

Leeds Beckett University

United Kingdom

[k.glyptou@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:k.glyptou@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Dr Kyriaki Glyptou is a Senior Lecturer in the Subject of International Tourism Management at Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom. She holds the qualification of Environmental Engineer from Wageningen University in the Netherlands and a PhD in Strategic Tourism Destination Management and Regional Development from the Business School of the University of the Aegean in Greece. Kyriaki has gained international exposure through her research, consulting and teaching experience in Italy, Greece, Germany, the Netherlands and currently UK. Her research revolves around systemic tourism and hospitality management approaches focusing on issues of sustainability, resilience and decision making under uncertainty and adversity.



**Goffi, Gianluca**

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
Hong Kong, SAR

[gianluca.goffi@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:gianluca.goffi@polyu.edu.hk)

Gianluca Goffi joined the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University as an Assistant Professor in March 2025. His research primarily focuses on sustainable tourism, destination competitiveness, tourism governance, and tourist behaviour. He has also conducted extensive research in regional economics and labour economics. His work has been published in leading international journals and he has authored several books on destination management, regional development, and labour market dynamics. Before joining SHTM, Gianluca worked for 20 years as an economic analyst for the regional government of Marche, Italy, where he developed numerous technical reports and policy analyses. He also held postdoctoral research positions at Marche Polytechnic University, the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. His research includes multiple case studies in developing countries and emerging economies, offering valuable insights into sustainability and economic development. His work aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers, businesses, and destinations, advocating for a holistic and integrated approach to sustainability.

**Góis, Sara**

IGOT – University of Lisbon  
Portugal

[saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt)

I am a researcher in Tourism studies and a PhD candidate at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, from the University of Lisbon (IGOT-UL). I hold a master in Tourism and Communication from the same institution and my bachelor is in Languages Literature and Culture. I have been developing research in tourism sustainability, urban tourism, place branding and strategic communication of tourism destinations

**Gonda, Tibor**

University of Pecs  
Hungary

[gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu)

**González Domingo, Alejandro**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[alejandrogonzalez@urv.cat](mailto:alejandrogonzalez@urv.cat)

PhD student in human geography and researcher at environmental NGOs. Fields of interest: labour precarity, cultural geography, affect theory, STS and environment.

**Grabher, Barbara**

University of Brighton  
United Kingdom

[b.grabher@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:b.grabher@brighton.ac.uk)

Dr Barbara Grabher is a trained Anthropologist with a specialisation in Gender Studies and interest in Critical Event Studies. With this background, she investigates event-based urban/ regional regeneration and associated socio-cultural value negotiations.

**Graf, Manuela**

Friedrich Schiller University Jena  
Germany

[manuela.graf@uni-jena.de](mailto:manuela.graf@uni-jena.de)

With extensive experience in heritage management and corporate communications, Manuela Graf's work focuses on branding, strategic positioning, value creation and innovation development. Currently

serving as a research associate at the University of Jena, she coordinates the Interregional S3 Partnership for Virtual and Smart Cultural Tourism.

Her research and projects are guided by key questions such as: How can leveraging heritage and strategic storytelling contribute to effective branding, value creation and the (re)shaping of unique corporate and place identities? And in what ways can the heritage route model and the metaverse be employed to accelerate innovation and unlock new opportunities for growth?

Manuela Graf's work is inherently multidisciplinary, intersecting cultural and corporate heritage, branding, tourism, creative industries and sustainable development. Over the past decade, she has developed deep expertise in heritage routes, playing a central role in both research and applied initiatives in this area. In addition, Manuela Graf has cultivated strong expertise in cross-sector networking and business cluster development, with a particular focus on tourism-related industries. Looking ahead, she aims to drive innovation by translating academic knowledge into practice, enhancing interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration and strengthening interregional networks while supporting the creation of business meta-clusters.

**Gretzel, Ulrike**

University of Southern California  
USA

[gretzel@hotmail.com](mailto:gretzel@hotmail.com)

**Guachalla, Adrian**

London Metropolitan University  
United Kingdom

[a.guachalla@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:a.guachalla@londonmet.ac.uk)

I hold a PhD in Tourism Management awarded by the University of Westminster. My Doctoral research which focused on the Royal Opera House and its role in the perception and experience of Covent Garden. Before joining London Metropolitan University as a Lecturer in Tourism and Creative Enterprise, I served as Course Leader and Subject Lead in tourism at Buckinghamshire New University. I also led programmes in festivals and events management at Middlesex University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Other appointments include a Senior Lecturing role at Canterbury Christ Church University and teaching tourism and events at the University of Westminster. My teaching is rooted in several years working in the hospitality and tourism industries as a Visitor Experience Agent for the Royal Opera House and in events management/student services as a Resident Advisor at International Students House in London.

I was Buckinghamshire New University's first to be awarded Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. I am currently an External Examiner at Teesside University and also acted as External Examiner for Southampton Solent University, Middlesex University and Bournemouth University's International College tourism and hospitality programmes.

**Guadagno, Carlo**

IGOT – University of Lisbon  
Portugal

[carlog@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:carlog@edu.ulisboa.pt)

I do critical postdisciplinary research - rooted in a humble posthumanist ethos - on collaborative tourism governance, as a mechanism to prevent overtourism and enable different tourism futures. Educational, professional and academic pursuits have led me to navigate diverse cultural landscapes across Europe. As a PhD candidate/fellow in Tourism at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Lisbon (IGOT-ULisboa), I am now a researcher of the TERRITUR Research Group (Tourism, Heritage and Space) at the Centre of Geographical Studies (CEG), R&D Unit part of the Associate Laboratory TERRA, and of the C&A Parque Foundation.

**Gutiérrez Palomero, Aaron**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

**Halkier, Henrik**

Aalborg University  
Denmark  
[halkier@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:halkier@ikl.aau.dk)

Henrik Halkier is professor of tourism and regional development at Aalborg University, Denmark.

**Harris, Karen**

University of Pretoria  
South Africa  
[karen.harris@up.ac.za](mailto:karen.harris@up.ac.za)

Prof Karen Leigh Harris is a full professor at the University of Pretoria where she is the acting Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies. She holds a DLitt et Phil in History as well as a higher education diploma and is an accredited culture tourist guide. She is a pioneer in the teaching of Heritage and Cultural Tourism at tertiary level within South Africa. She is also the coordinator of the ATLAS Africa chapter. She is the recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Teaching and Learning, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award as well as Faculty Supervisors Award.

**Heslinga, Jasper**

NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com](mailto:jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com)

Jasper Heslinga works as senior-lecturer at the European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI), which is based at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. He obtained his PhD degree at the department of Cultural Geography from the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. His PhD thesis, entitled 'Synergetic tourism-landscape interactions: Policy, public discourse and partnerships' was about finding balance and synergy between tourism development and nature protection. Heslinga has recently worked for the OECD at the Tourism Policy and Analysis Unit as a Policy Analyst and Economist and worked as Program Manager for the Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality (CELTH) in The Netherlands.

**Hoed, Wilbert den**

Universitat Ramon Llull – Blanquerna / Universitat Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[wilbertdenhoed@me.com](mailto:wilbertdenhoed@me.com)

Wilbert den Hoed is a Ramón y Cajal Research Fellow at the Blanquerna School of Psychology, Education and Sports Sciences of the Universitat Ramon Llull and Adjunct Lecturer at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. He holds a PhD in Human Geography from Newcastle University and held postdoctoral positions at the Department of Urbanism of TU Delft and at the Department of Geography of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. At the latter, he recently completed an MSCA-project about the age-friendliness of mobility transitions in tourist cities. His research operates at the intersection of active mobility, tourism, and social inclusion and justice, taking inspiration from geography, planning, health, and mobility studies.

**Horvath, Endre**

Budapest Metropolitan University  
Hungary  
[ehorvath@metropolitan.hu](mailto:ehorvath@metropolitan.hu)

Dr. Endre Horvath started in higher education in 1993, designing and delivering Business Communications courses at Budapest University of Economic Sciences. After a Fulbright grant at GW in 1996/97, and consulting for the World Bank, Endre returned to Budapest and has worked with public, financial and ICT organizations. Dr. Horvath demonstrates a novel approach to management, combining global methodologies and techniques with East European culture and experience.

**Hover, Moniek**

Breda University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands

[hover.m@buas.nl](mailto:hover.m@buas.nl)

Dr. Moniek Hover is Professor of Storytelling at Breda University of Applied Sciences. Moniek researches the connections between storytelling and experiences (emotions, memories and meaning-making) in the contexts of leisure, tourism and cultural heritage sites. She delivers presentations at international academic and industry conferences, and she publishes in international academic and industry journals.

With interdisciplinary BUas teams, Moniek also provides (storytelling-based) design projects in the fields of leisure and tourism. This includes story-based concepts, storylines, transmedia storytelling approaches, and scripts and dialogues for interactive digital applications.

**Huang, Lingling**

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano  
Italy

[Lingling.Huang@unibz.it](mailto:Lingling.Huang@unibz.it)

**Ioannides, Dimitri**

Mid Sweden University  
Sweden

[dimitri.ioannides@miun.se](mailto:dimitri.ioannides@miun.se)

Dimitri Ioannides is Chaired Professor of Human Geography in the Institution of Economics, Geography, Law and Tourism and researcher in the European Tourism Research Institute (ETOUR) at Mid Sweden University. He is interested among others in tourism planning and in matters relating to the social-equity dimension of sustainability, including the geographies of tourism workers and work. His latest co-edited book is Polar Tourism and Communities: Experiences, Knowledge Building, Opportunities and Challenges (2025, CABI).

**Iturralde, Jaime**

Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi  
Ecuador

[jaime.iturralde@upec.edu.ec](mailto:jaime.iturralde@upec.edu.ec)

PhD in Geography from the Complutense University of Madrid and Master's in Cultural Tourism from the University of Girona, Spain. He currently serves as the Director and Full Professor of the Tourism program at the Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi (UPEC), where he also leads the Tourism Research Laboratory of Carchi. His academic and research trajectory focuses on cultural heritage, tourism, and border studies, on which he has published scientific articles and specialized works. He has been a speaker at international conferences held in Spain, Mexico, Portugal, Colombia, and Ecuador. He is a member of the Sustainable Tourism Development Research Group (GIDETURS) and actively participates in innovation, territorial development, and community engagement projects focused on sustainable tourism.

**James, Laura**

Aalborg University  
Denmark

[leja@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:leja@ikl.aau.dk)

**Johansen, Kelsey**

University of Eastern Finland  
Finland

[kelsey.johansen@uef.fi](mailto:kelsey.johansen@uef.fi)

Dr. Kelsey M Johansen is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Eastern Finland's Business School (Tourism Business Research Group and UEF Water Research Community). She specializes in the amenity, experiential, economic, and societal value of blue spaces and trails for individuals,

businesses, communities, and society, particularly from the perspective of recreation, well-being, and tourism. As a broadly trained social scientist, she focuses on projects that activate community assets to develop sustainable recreation and tourism products and engages in knowledge mobilization and translation within and across sectors using a community-centred, service-focused, and solution-oriented lens.

**Junqing, Hao**

Xi'an University of Finance and Economics

China

[junqinghao@xaufe.edu.cn](mailto:junqinghao@xaufe.edu.cn)

**Kacprzak, Karolina**

University of Lodz

Poland

[karolina.kacprzak@geo.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:karolina.kacprzak@geo.uni.lodz.pl)

**Kazakova, Anna**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[anna.kazakova@urv.cat](mailto:anna.kazakova@urv.cat)

**Keshodkar, Akbar**

Moravian University

USA

[keshodkara@moravian.edu](mailto:keshodkara@moravian.edu)

Education:

2005, PhD, Anthropology, Oxford University

1999, MSc, Anthropology, Oxford University

1998, MA, Islamic Studies and Humanities, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

1996, BA, Biology and Islamic Studies, Oberlin College

Employment:

2014 - Present: Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Moravian University, Bethlehem, PA, USA

2009 - 2014: Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University, Dubai, UAE

2006-2009: Adjunct Professor of Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL, USA

Recent Publications:

2024 - "Who Pays the Price for Consuming Nature? Tourism and the Politics of Belonging in the Rural Coastal Community of Newport, Oregon, USA," in Graham Roberts and Pascale Cohen-Avenel (eds). *Whose Space is it Anyway? Place-Branding and Politics of Representation*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, pp. 195-224.

2022 - "Indian Ocean trade and emerging pathways of mobility in neoliberal Zanzibar," *The Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*, 6 (1): 38-64.

2022 - "Marriage, mobility and belonging of South Asian women in Zanzibar," in Iain Walker and Marie-Aude Fouéré (eds). *Across the Waves: Strategies of Belonging in Indian Ocean Island Societies*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 49-74.

**Khwanyuen, Krittabhas**

Prince of Songkla University

Thailand

[krittabhas.k@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:krittabhas.k@phuket.psu.ac.th)

**Koens, Ko**

InHolland University of Applied Sciences

Netherlands

[ko.koens@inholland.nl](mailto:ko.koens@inholland.nl)

Ko Koens is Professor of New Urban Tourism at Inholland University of Applied Sciences in Rotterdam, who has been involved in sustainable tourism for nearly twenty years. My work focuses on sustainable urban tourism with an emphasis on new urban tourism, urban tourism in transition, overtourism, city hospitality and tourism of inequalities (slum tourism).

**Kowalczyk-Aniol, Joanna**

University of Lodz

Poland

[joanna.kowalczyk@geo.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:joanna.kowalczyk@geo.uni.lodz.pl)

Joanna Kowalczyk-Aniol is Assistant Professor at the University of Lodz (Poland), Institute of Urban Geography, Tourism Studies and Geoinformation. Research interests: tourism geography, urban studies, touristification processes and mechanisms, urban tourism, historical cities, social and spatial aspects of tourism development, generational approach in tourism, urban liveability.

**Laleh, Elmira**

University of Padova

Italy

[elmira.laleh@unipd.it](mailto:elmira.laleh@unipd.it)

Elmira Laleh is a researcher at the University of Padua, where she investigates the intersection of music and tourism. She graduated with highest honors (110 e lode) in 2024 from the Master's program in Tourism, Culture and Sustainability at the same university. Her current research focuses on music tourism dynamics, audience engagement in music events, and the integration of tourism and music.

**Lazic, Stefan**

University of Trento

Italy

[stefan.lazic@unitn.it](mailto:stefan.lazic@unitn.it)

**Leerink, Faye**

Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group

United Kingdom

[faye.leerink@tandf.co.uk](mailto:faye.leerink@tandf.co.uk)

Faye Leerink is a Commissioning Editor at Routledge, publishing books in the areas of tourism, hospitality, events, heritage, human geography and related areas.

**Lesjak, Miha**

University of Primorska

Slovenia

[miha.lesjak@fts.upr.si](mailto:miha.lesjak@fts.upr.si)

Dr. Miha Lesjak is associate professor at University of Primorska, Faculty of tourism studies Turistica. His research interests are focused on sustainability, sport tourism, impacts of sporting events, event management and destination management. He has performed many contributions in the scientific journals from the field of his research and appearances at the scientific international conferences. Besides his research and publishing activities, he was an active member of Tourism 4.0 project that aims to transform the today tourist industry into a value-based economy through innovation, knowledge, technology and creativity. At the moment he is a project group member of Interreg CE project titled Innovative participatory sustainable business model for cycling along the Iron Curtain Trail (ICTr-CE) and Interreg Euro - MED project MAST - Making sustainable tourism possible. Dr. Lesjak was a member of LOC FIS Nordic World Ski Championship Planica 2023 responsible for sustainability of event.

**Lind, Anna Luna**

Aalborg University  
Denmark  
[allind@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:allind@ikl.aau.dk)

Anna Luna Lind is a PhD student at Aalborg University since 2024. She has a Masters in Tourism from Aalborg University. She is currently part of the Horizon Europe project 'CROCUS', which aims to address socio-economic challenges faced by rural and remote areas through the promotion of cultural and creative tourism.

**López Ortiz, Alba**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[alba.lopezortiz@urv.cat](mailto:alba.lopezortiz@urv.cat)

**López Ruiz, Silvia María**

University of Girona  
Spain  
[silviamaria.lopez@udg.edu](mailto:silviamaria.lopez@udg.edu)

**Lopuch, Jozef**

Masaryk University, FEA  
Czech Republic  
[lopuch@ped.muni.cz](mailto:lopuch@ped.muni.cz)

I am a geographer from Masaryk University, Department of Geography. There are many geographical topics that I am interested in, for example dark tourism (from my bachelor thesis), cultural geography, visual geography, popular culture and recently also geography of memory. In my research I use mostly qualitative methods. My other interests are cooking, music, travelling, sports (mainly watching), video games and board games.

**Lovell, Jane**

Canterbury Christ Church University  
United Kingdom  
[jane.lovell@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:jane.lovell@canterbury.ac.uk)

Dr Jane Lovell is at Reader at Canterbury Christ Church University where she teaches tourism and events, specialising in creative destinations, green festival production, event experience design and heritage tourism. Her research and publications focus on heritage spaces and include: new animistic tourism; magical tourism; storytelling, myth, fantasy, legends and folklore in tourism; place agency, new animism and more-than human eventscaes. She also researches the light installations that she continues to stage.

**Lucrezi, Serena**

North-West University  
South Africa  
[23952997@nwu.ac.za](mailto:23952997@nwu.ac.za)

**Lüfter, Ralf**

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano  
Italy  
[rluefter@unibz.it](mailto:rluefter@unibz.it)



**Mai, Nicola**

University of Leicester  
United Kingdom

[nick.mai@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:nick.mai@leicester.ac.uk)

My research bridges criminology, sociology, and anthropology and is rooted in qualitative methodologies and long-term ethnographic engagement. It focuses on the intersections between migration, environmental degradation, and green criminology. Specifically, I am interested in how the interplay between solastalgia, overtourism and migration affect social cohesion and amplify vulnerabilities among local and already marginalised populations. By integrating participatory filmmaking methods, I aim to document and analyse these complex dynamics in ways that resonate both within and beyond academia advocating for structural changes that align with the lived realities and needs of the communities directly concerned.

**Månsson, Maria**

Lund University  
Sweden

[maria.mansson@isk.lu.se](mailto:maria.mansson@isk.lu.se)

Maria Månsson is a senior lecturer at the Department of Strategic communication at Lund University, Sweden. She is currently engaged in two different research projects as project leader: Rethinking urban tourism development: dealing with sustainability in the age of overtourism, and Resilient destination development in the wake of COVID-19. Her research interests deals with sustainable tourism development especially in regards to resilience and media influence, place branding and place marketing with a special attention to popular culture from both management and tourist perspectives.

**Marine-Roig, Estela**

University of Lleida  
Spain

[estela.marine@udl.cat](mailto:estela.marine@udl.cat)

Estela Mariné-Roig is a Serra Hunter fellow (full professor) in Tourism Marketing at the University of Lleida (UdL), Catalonia, and an Assistant Professor of Sustainable Tourism and ICT (MSc) at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC). She holds a European PhD in Tourism and Leisure, an MSc in Tourism Management and Planning, a BA in Humanities, and a BA in Tourism. The Catalan Government awarded her the 2018 Medal of Tourism for the best knowledge and research project. Her research interests include the analysis of tourism and hospitality through online sources, especially traveller-generated content. Please see: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3275-0135>

**Mariotti, Alessia**

University of Bologna  
Italy

[alessia.mariotti@unibo.it](mailto:alessia.mariotti@unibo.it)

Alessia Mariotti was the head of the Center for Advanced Studies in Tourism (Rimini Campus) between 2014 and 2018 and is Full Professor in Economic Geography. She is currently a member of the IGU Tourism Geography Committee. Her main research interest are: cultural heritage, culture and local identity in a regional development perspective, tourism policies and sustainability, management plans and monitoring indicators for World Heritage sites, cultural routes and cultural itineraries.

**Marques, Lénia**

Erasmus University Rotterdam  
Netherlands

[marques@eshcc.eur.nl](mailto:marques@eshcc.eur.nl)

Lénia Marques is Assistant Professor of Cultural Management at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Her research focuses on the development of the cultural and creative industries and their relationships with other fields, such as tourism and events. Her recent interests include cities and the development of cultural and creative policies, as well as the valorisation of living heritage in particular in the context of mobilities. She was the coordinator of the international project



CultSense – Sensitizing Young Travellers for Local Cultures ([www.cultsense.com](http://www.cultsense.com)), a project to enhance cultural heritage mainly intangible in the context of education in tourism, culture and leisure. She is currently coordinating the Cultural Tourism track of the Erasmus Mundus joint degree MAGMa, Managing Art and Cultural Heritage in Global Markets.

**McGillivray, David**

University of the West of Scotland  
United Kingdom  
[David.McGillivray@uws.ac.uk](mailto:David.McGillivray@uws.ac.uk)

**Medina-Chavarria, Maria Esperanza**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[mariaesperanza.medina@urv.cat](mailto:mariaesperanza.medina@urv.cat)

**Mejia, Verónica**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[veronica.mejia@urv.cat](mailto:veronica.mejia@urv.cat)

**Miessner, Michael**

Universität Trier  
Germany  
[miessner@uni-trier.de](mailto:miessner@uni-trier.de)  
Junior professor for Economic Geography focussing on Tourism Geography at Trier University.

**Milan, Francesca**

Polytechnic University of Marche  
Italy  
[duratta@gmail.com](mailto:duratta@gmail.com)

**Milano, Claudio**

University of Barcelona  
Spain  
[claudiomilano@ub.edu](mailto:claudiomilano@ub.edu)  
Claudio Milano is a Ramon y Cajal Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Barcelona. Since 2021 he is the Co-Deputy Chair of the Commission on the Anthropology of Tourism for the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES). He is a member of the Research Group on Anthropology of Crisis and Contemporary Transformations (CRITS) and the President of the Observatory for the Anthropology of Urban Conflict (OACU). His main areas of interest are the political economy and the anthropology of tourism. In particular, his research focuses on touristification processes, social movements, and tourism labour regimes.

**Miravet Arnau, Daniel**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[daniel.miravet@urv.cat](mailto:daniel.miravet@urv.cat)

Daniel Miravet holds a PhD in Economics (2012) from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. Since 2009, he has worked as a mobility technician for the Consortium of Public Transport of Camp de Tarragona. Since 2010, he has been Part-time Lecturer in Applied Economics at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. Daniel's research interests cover a variety of topics in public transport use, transport mode choice studies, and tourist mobilities at destination.

**Morrissey, Aileen**

BOCA

Spain

[aileen.morrissey@gmail.com](mailto:aileen.morrissey@gmail.com)

**Moya, Daissy**

University of Girona

Spain

[daissy.moya@udg.edu](mailto:daissy.moya@udg.edu)

Daissy Moya holds a PhD in Tourism and is currently a professor at the Universitat de Girona in Spain.

She has over 22 years of academic experience, having taught at Universidad Externado de Colombia, where she specialized in the application of technology in tourism education and research. Her work bridges academia and industry, with a strong focus on sustainability, digital innovation, and capacity-building in the hospitality sector.

Her doctoral research explored the impact of online reputation on hotel performance in Latin America. Building on that foundation, she has developed tools to help hotels measure sustainability using accessible, practical indicators. She has led training programs for the GHL Hotel Chain, designing virtual courses in hotel management, customer service, human resources, and quality standards, reaching more than 5,000 employees across the region.

Daissy has participated in international conferences and collaborative projects, with a growing focus on integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into tourism strategies. Her current research involves developing sustainability measurement frameworks for hotels, aiming to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

She is passionate about empowering professionals and students to adopt responsible tourism practices through innovation, education, and applied research.

**Nautiyal, Rajesh**

University of Lincoln

United Kingdom

[rnautiyal@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:rnautiyal@lincoln.ac.uk)

Rajesh Nautiyal is a lecturer at the Lincoln International Business School, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom. His primary research is within the domain of yoga tourism, folklore, and indigenous research paradigms. In addition, he is also interested in destination management, tourism product development, and intangible cultural heritage.

**Novotná, Markéta**

Masaryk University, FEA

Czech Republic

[marketa.novotna@econ.muni.cz](mailto:marketa.novotna@econ.muni.cz)

**O'Connor, Peter**

University of South Australia

Australia

[peter.oconnor@unisa.edu.au](mailto:peter.oconnor@unisa.edu.au)

Dr. Peter O'Connor is Professor of Strategic Management and Co-Director of the Centre for Enterprise Dynamics in Global Economies (C-EDGE) at the University of South Australia Business School. His primary research and teaching focuses on the effect of digital on business, particularly on retailing and marketing. Peter has published in leading academic journals including the Journal of Marketing, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Tourism Management, the Cornell Quarterly and the International Journal of Hospitality Management, amongst others. Prior to joining UniSA, Peter founded the Chair in Digital Disruption at Essec Business School in France, where he held a variety of other academic roles.

**Onderwater, Leontine**

ATLAS

Netherlands

[leontine.underwater@atlas-euro.org](mailto:leontine.underwater@atlas-euro.org)**Ong, Chin Ee**

Macao University of Tourism

Macao SAR, China

[chineeeong@utm.edu.mo](mailto:chineeeong@utm.edu.mo)

A multi-disciplinary Singaporean scholar with roots in tourism and cultural geography, Professor Chin-Ee Ong is currently Professor of Cultural and Tourism Management at Macao University of Tourism. His research and teaching focus on the cultural and creative in tourism and heritage management. In addition to research grounded in the field and the empirical, Prof Ong advances a new theoretical approach he terms, 'plasmatic thinking'. Plasmatic thinking stresses the need to illuminate the 'charges' that initiate and hold social and material situations together. He clarifies and discusses these ideas in a 2023 Asia-Pacific Viewpoint article. Chin Ee serves as Editor-in-Chief for Tourist Studies (Sage Publications), Co-Chair for ATLAS Critical Tourism Studies-Asia Pacific and Asia Coordinator and Coordinator for Heritage Tourism and Education Group at the Association of Leisure and Tourism Education (ATLAS). Beyond Tourist Studies, he serves on the Editorial Board for Tourism Geographies, Tourism Culture and Communication, Journal of Heritage Tourism, and Tourism Critiques and the Editorial Review Board of International Journal of Tourism Cities. In China, Prof Ong is a committee member of China Geographical Society's Cultural Geography Sub-Committee.

**Oszkó-Jakab, Natália**

Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation

Hungary

[jakab.natalia@mtpa.hu](mailto:jakab.natalia@mtpa.hu)

I am an experienced cultural manager and director of Hungary's Valley of Arts Festival. As head of the Arts for Rural Development Foundation, I focus on cultural revitalization of rural areas through sustainable tourism and community-based events. As the co-founder of the Music Hungary Association and chair of its Festival Section, I am recognized among Forbes' Top 10 Most Influential Women and the Tourism TOP50. My leadership and international experience make her a strong project manager for Creative Europe COO initiatives.

**Paez Gil, Sandra**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[sandra.paez@urv.cat](mailto:sandra.paez@urv.cat)**Paleka, Hana**

University of Rijeka

Croatia

[hana.paleka@fmtu.uniri.hr](mailto:hana.paleka@fmtu.uniri.hr)**Papadaki, Eirini**

Hellenic Mediterranean University

Greece

[eirpapadaki@hmu.gr](mailto:eirpapadaki@hmu.gr)

Associate Professor in Communication, Mediation and Cultural Industries. Research interests: cultural management, cultural and creative tourism, cultural and creative industries (and their connection to tourism), visual studies, visual semiotics, mass and new media, mediation of art and culture.

**Pappalepore, Ilaria**

University of Westminster  
United Kingdom

[i.pappalepore@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:i.pappalepore@westminster.ac.uk)

Ilaria is a reader (associate professor) at the University of Westminster, and co-convenor of the Place and Experience research group. Her research expertise lies in the intersection between tourism, events and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). Her research focuses on two key areas: 1) tourism in cities, particularly the development of new tourism areas in peripheral areas and the relationship between creative industries and tourism; and 2) Major events, such as the Olympic Games, and their impacts on cultural and creative businesses, and on tourism in cities.

**Pastor Alcaraz, Ana**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[ana.pastor@urv.cat](mailto:ana.pastor@urv.cat)

**Paulino Valdeperez, Isabel**

University of Girona  
Spain

[isabel.paulino@udg.edu](mailto:isabel.paulino@udg.edu)

Postdoctoral researcher in tourism destination management at the University of Girona and the University of Rovira & Virgili.

**Pinto, Irene**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[irene.pinto@studenti.unicz.it](mailto:irene.pinto@studenti.unicz.it); [irene.pinto@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:irene.pinto@estudiants.urv.cat)

Irene Pinto (Venice, 1995) holds a Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures (Bologna Alma Mater), and a Master's Degree in Innovation and Organization of Culture and the Arts (Bologna Alma Mater). She is PhD candidate (Catanzaro Magna Graecia), currently attending the Universitat Rovira i Virgili of Tarragona (Spain) as a visiting PhD student. Her project focuses on the economic and social impact of technological innovation in cultural tourism.

**Ponte di Pino, Oliviero**

Associazione Culturale TrovaFestival  
Italy

[olivieropdp@gmail.com](mailto:olivieropdp@gmail.com)

**Porritt Best, Jess**

University of Westminster  
United Kingdom

[j.best@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:j.best@westminster.ac.uk)

Jess Porritt Best is a Doctoral Researcher and Visiting Lecturer at the University of Westminster. Jess's research looks at transformational experience design and inclusion in leisure and event environments focussing specifically on ultra-marathons. She is also a member of the Ultra-Running Research Network.

**Put-van den Beemt, Wesley**

Breda University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands

[beemt.w@buas.nl](mailto:beemt.w@buas.nl)

Wesley Put has a background in Business Economics with a specialisation in Services marketing. She started her career as a researcher in Consumer Behaviour Research. For almost 17 years she works in Higher education as Lecturer and Researcher. Creating meaningful learning experiences is her passion. Her expertise lies in the field of design thinking, storytelling, customer experience and digital marketing. She gets energized from combining education and research in the field of Tourism and

Leisure. It is a personal interest to train individuals and groups in creative leadership, social skills, teambuilding and personal development.

**Qi, Shanshan**

Macao University of Tourism

Macao SAR, China

[shanshan@utm.edu.mo](mailto:shanshan@utm.edu.mo)

Shanshan Qi, PhD, Macao University of tourism. Research Interests Artificial Intelligence in Education and Animal Welfare.

**Qiu, Xudong**

University of Surrey

United Kingdom

[xq00097@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:xq00097@surrey.ac.uk)

**Quinn, Bernadette**

TU Dublin

Ireland

[bernadette.quinn@tudublin.ie](mailto:bernadette.quinn@tudublin.ie)

Bernadette Quinn PhD (Human Geography), is a Senior Lecturer in Technological University Dublin. She publishes mainly on arts festivals and cultural events, being interested in the roles they play in transforming space and in shaping community and place identities. Her work has been published in a variety of international journals and edited collections. She recently co-edited *Festivals and the City: the Contested Geographies of Urban Events* (University of Westminster Press). Recent funded projects include the Irish Research Council funded project *Festivals, Audiences and the Digital Experience* (FADE) and the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) funded project *Festivals, Events and Inclusive Public Spaces* (Festspace). Bernadette is a member of the International Geographical Union Tourism Commission board.

**Radzevičius, Martynas**

Kauno kolegija Higher Education Institution

Lithuania

[martynas.radzevicius@go.kauko.lt](mailto:martynas.radzevicius@go.kauko.lt)

**Raffay, Zoltán**

University of Pecs

Hungary

[raffayz@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:raffayz@ktk.pte.hu)

Zoltán Raffay graduated in 1994 as a geographer, English teacher and tourism manager. Since 1997 he has Marketing Manager degree. Before the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs he worked for the Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the College of Dunaújváros, and the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development of the University of Pécs. His research fields are tourism and spatial development, accessible tourism, angling tourism and ecotourism. Presently he is associate professor at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs. He has collaborated in several international research projects.

**Ratna Ayu Ningrum, Teges**

Edinburgh Napier University

United Kingdom

[T.Ningrum@napier.ac.uk](mailto:T.Ningrum@napier.ac.uk)

**Rebelo, Sandra**

IGOT – University of Lisbon  
Portugal

[sandra-rebelo1@hotmail.com](mailto:sandra-rebelo1@hotmail.com)

**Academic Background**

- PhD in Tourism (ongoing) - Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning & Estoril Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (2023-Present).
- Master's in Tourism - Lusófona University (2019-2022).
- Postgraduate in Executive Coaching and High-Performance Leadership - Higher Institute of Management (2022).
- Master's in Physical Education Teaching - Lusófona University (2014-2017).
- Bachelor's in Sports, Physical Education, and Health - Rio Maior School of Sports (2011-2014).

**Publications**

- Inclusive Tourism: Assessing the Accessibility of Lisbon as a Tourist Destination - MDPI Tourism and Hospitality.
- Inclusive Tourism: Assessing the Accessibility of Lisbon as a Tourist Destination - Amazon.
- Engagement Dynamics of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Touristic Activities: A Case Study of Best Practices - Sustainable and Resilient Businesses in the Global Economy (DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-75883-6\_5).

**Conferences & Lectures**

- Inclusive and Accessible Tourism - THIK International Conference (2024).
- Inclusive Tourism: Accessibility of Lisbon as a Tourist Destination - THInC 2nd Tourism Congress (2022).
- Participation in PISA VET Project (Tourism & Hospitality).

**Rezaei, Nafiseh**

Hong Kong Metropolitan University  
Hong Kong SAR, China

[nrezaei@hkmu.edu.hk](mailto:nrezaei@hkmu.edu.hk)

Dr. Nafiseh Rezaei is a Senior Lecturer at the Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration, Hong Kong Metropolitan University. She got her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, her Master's degree from the University of Tehran, and her Bachelor's degree from the University of Mazandaran. Before joining the HKMU, she worked as a teaching support staff member in the Faculty of Social Science, The University of Hong Kong. Gaining inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural teaching and research experiences helped Nafiseh broaden her horizon; now, they are her main passion in the academic profession. Her teaching areas and research interests include social psychology of tourism, consumer behaviour and experience, cross-cultural studies, accessible tourism, and risk perception.

**Rickly, Jillian**

University of Nottingham  
United Kingdom

[jillian.rickly@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jillian.rickly@nottingham.ac.uk)

Jillian Rickly is a Professor of Tourism at the University of Nottingham. She is a tourism geographer with research interests in authenticity/alienation, mobilities, accessibility, and more-than-human relations. Her work has been published widely across the Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Management, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Studies, Cultural Geographies, and Mobilities, as well as in numerous edited volumes.

**Roelofsen, Maartje**

Wageningen University & Research  
Netherlands

[maartje.roelofsen@wur.nl](mailto:maartje.roelofsen@wur.nl); [acquisitions\\_ari@uoc.edu](mailto:acquisitions_ari@uoc.edu)

Maartje Roelofsen is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Cultural Geography group at Wageningen University. Her research examines digital transformations within the realm of tourism, urban space,

and geography education. Within the context of tourism, she has examined the impact of digitalization on hospitality- and tourism work and understandings of home and (un)homeliness.

**Rossi, Eleonora**

Dalarna University

Sweden

[ers@du.se](mailto:ers@du.se)

**Rudolf, Wawrzyniec**

University of Lodz

Poland

[wawrzyniec.rudolf@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:wawrzyniec.rudolf@uni.lodz.pl)

I work as a university professor in the Department of City and Region Management at the Faculty of Management, University of Lodz (Poland). I am the author of the monograph "Territorial Marketing in a Relational Approach" (2016). Previously (2001-2011), I worked as a post-doc in the Department of International Marketing and Distribution at the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz. I obtained my PhD with the dissertation titled "Promotion of an Industrial City to External Investors" (2001).

My research interests include:

- \* City/territorial branding, territorial marketing, marketing in public and non-profit organizations;
- \* Contemporary models of public management (New Public Management, public governance), and management in the cultural sector;
- \* Public policy processes, EU cohesion policy, local/regional cultural policy, and public policy - planning and implementation.

**Russo, Antonio Paolo**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[antonio.russo@urv.cat](mailto:antonio.russo@urv.cat)

Antonio Paolo Russo is Professor of Urban Geography and Serra Húnter Fellow with the Department of Geography, Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona. He is the coordinator of the PhD program in Tourism and Leisure at URV, and lectures in under- and postgraduate courses on destination management and cultural tourism. He is currently (2025) in sabbatical leave and visiting researcher at UQÀM, Montreal.

Dr. Russo is author of more than 50 publications in academic journals and books on research topics that range from tourism studies to cultural and urban studies of tourism, mobilities and injustice. He is member of the research group GRATET, with which he leads or participates in national and international research projects, the most recent being the H2020 project 'SMARTDEST' tackling tourism mobilities and social exclusion (2020-2024). He also coordinates the Special Interest Group "Space Place Mobilities in Tourism" in ATLAS, and is a regular advisor for local governments and international institutions.

**Sahili, Hanine El**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[hanine.elsahili@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:hanine.elsahili@estudiants.urv.cat)

**EDUCATION**

Instituto Cervantes - Beirut [April-June] C level in Spanish Language- a course to perfect the Language (Ends June 2025).

Universidad Rovira I Virgili [2024-present] - PhD studies in Tourism and Leisure - Cotutelle with the Lebanese University (pending).

Lebanese University [2023-present] - PhD studies in Tourism, Archaeology, and Augmented Reality (pending).

Universidad Santiago de Compostela [2023] - Erasmus mobility program as a PhD student at the faculty of history and geography under the supervision of professor Jose Carlos Sanchez Pardo.



Universidad Rey Juan Carlos [2021] - [2022] \* Official Master's degree in International Tourism Management, Graduated with a notable mark: 8.5/10. Title of Thesis: Digital applications in archaeological sites: The Case of Spain.

Lebanese university, faculty of tourism and hospitality management - Master's Degree in Tourism management year one [2020] - [2021]. \* Bachelor's degree in tourism management [2017] - [2020]. Graduated with a GPA of 85/100 with no record of failed or dropped courses. With Completed research in the following topic: The efficient mode of travel agency management in crisis: from the perspective of tourists.

National conservatory of music: [2019]-[present] \* Baccalaureate in Qanoon Instrument. (Third Year).

**Saladié Borraz, Òscar**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[oscar.saladie@urv.cat](mailto:oscar.saladie@urv.cat)

**Salerno, Giacomo-Maria**

Università degli Studi di Siena

Italy

[giacomo.salerno@unisi.it](mailto:giacomo.salerno@unisi.it)

Giacomo-Maria Salerno is a Researcher in Geography at the Department of Social Political and Cognitive Sciences (DISPOC) of the University of Siena, now visiting at the University Rovira i Virgili, Department of Geography / Faculty of Tourism and Geography. He has a Master degree in Philosophy and holds a PhD in Urban Planning. His research interests focus on heritage studies, touristification and gentrification processes, housing, urban social movements and right to the city. He is a member of OCIO - Osservatorio Civico sulla casa e sull'abitare (Venice).

**Saliu, Maria Carla**

University of Cagliari

Italy

[mariacarla.saliu@unica.it](mailto:mariacarla.saliu@unica.it)

**Salvador Almela, Marta**

CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy

Spain

[marta.salvador@cett.cat](mailto:marta.salvador@cett.cat)

Marta Salvador Almela graduated with a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Sussex (United Kingdom). She is currently doing her PhD on volunteer tourism and social media at the University of Lleida (Spain). She is the research coordinator at the CETT, where she also works as a professor. Her lines of research focus on the analysis of tourism from an anthropological perspective.

**Sangkaew, Nichapat**

Prince of Songkla University (Phuket Campus)

Thailand

[nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th)

Nichapat Sangkaew holds a position as a faculty member at the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University (Phuket campus), Thailand. Her areas of expertise lie in data analytics and quantitative methods in the field of tourism. Currently, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in data science, further enhancing her knowledge and skills in this domain. For any inquiries or contact, she can be reached at [Nichapat.sangkaew@gmail.com](mailto:Nichapat.sangkaew@gmail.com).

**Sanz-Ibáñez, Cinta**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[cinta.sanzi@urv.cat](mailto:cinta.sanzi@urv.cat)



**Sao Joao, Erica**

University of Johannesburg  
South Africa

[ericasj@uj.ac.za](mailto:ericasj@uj.ac.za)

Erica Sao Joao is a lecturer at the School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH), University of Johannesburg (UJ). She had 12 years of working in the hospitality industry before joining the STH Team. Her primary research area is hospitality, Food and Beverage management and control. The hospitality industry is vulnerable to macro- and micro economic disruptors which makes it an interesting industry to work and research in. She has a keen interest in green hotels, sustainability, club management, hospitality graduate workplace readiness and hospitality 'human flourishing'.

**Senkic, Matea**

University of Edinburgh  
United Kingdom

[matea.senkic@ed.ac.uk](mailto:matea.senkic@ed.ac.uk)

I'm a PhD researcher and teaching assistant in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. I earned my master's degree in sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, in 2014. From 2015 to 2019 I was employed at the Department of Culture and Communication at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Zagreb. I have published papers on topics related to cultural tourism and heritage, creativity and emotions. My research interests include heritage, culture, tourism, cities, and authenticity.

**Serrano, Damià**

Tourism Catalan Agency  
Spain

**Shields, Patrick**

Munster Technological University  
Ireland

[pshields@cliffhousehotel.ie](mailto:pshields@cliffhousehotel.ie); [patrickj.shields@mycit.ie](mailto:patrickj.shields@mycit.ie)

Patrick Shields is currently undertaking a PhD in the area of Generative Artificial Intelligence on a full time basis at Munster Technological University (MTU) since January of 2025. The PhD is part of the TU Rise scholarship programme funded by the Government of Ireland, the European Union and MTU. This research seeks to explore ways to nurture and support innovative enterprises, elevate the global competitiveness of Irish based companies, expand export opportunities and, ultimately, lead to increased revenues and employment in Ireland. Patrick's key interests are around employee behavioural management as well as ethics & governance for Generative AI deployment within enterprise.

Prior to commencing the PhD, Patrick was a Hotel General Manager and Director for several prestigious properties and groups working in countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia as well as at home in Ireland. Patrick is a current Chamber of Commerce Board Member & Director, an MBA Graduate in Strategy and holds a BA Honours Degree in Hospitality Management.

**Silva, Goretti**

Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo  
Portugal

[goretti@estg.ipv.pt](mailto:goretti@estg.ipv.pt)

Orcid <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6661-0515>

PhD in Tourism from Bournemouth University, scholar and researcher in Tourism at the Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo. The main topics of interest are sustainability and tourism development, religious tourism, nature and outdoor tourism, and active learning approaches. Member of the Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation (CITUR). Coordinated and was a team member of RD&I projects, both at national and international levels, including EU-funded projects, over the last few years. In addition to academia, she has started her business in the tourism sector, Fábrica do Chocolate, Hotel| Museum.

**Skinner, Jonathan**

University of Surrey

United Kingdom

[jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk)

Reader in the Anthropology of Events at University of Surrey. Award-winning author/editor of 13 books on tourism, events and research methods; 26 articles and 40 book chapters including work on carnivals, dark tourism, exclusion zones, and social dance. Experience in festival design and production, creative methods and tour guiding choreography, wellbeing and social dance.

**Smedt, Eva de**

IDEA Consult

Belgium

[eva.desmedt@ideaconsult.be](mailto:eva.desmedt@ideaconsult.be)

Eva has a background in academic and practice-based research and strategic foresight on topics such as urban leisure, culture, tourism and journalism. She has a profound methodological expertise in discourse and conversation analysis and futures studies. After completing her PhD in Media & Communication Studies at VUB in 2015, she joined Tourism Flemish Brabant to help shape policy around Brussels and expats.

From 2016 to 2023, she was a researcher and lecturer at the Erasmushogeschool Brussel (EhB), where she was part of the research team Open Time - Applied Futures Research. There, she gained valuable experience within futures research and coordinated several case studies exploring preferable futures for the Brussels' cultural sector. Eva still teaches at EhB and, as a senior research consultant at IDEA, focuses on strategic place-making for destination management organisations and museums.

**Smith, Melanie Kay**

Budapest University of Economics and Business

Hungary

[smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu](mailto:smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu)

Dr Melanie Kay Smith is an Associate Professor, Researcher and Consultant whose work focuses on urban planning, cultural tourism, health tourism and the relationship between tourism and wellbeing. She has lectured in the UK, Hungary, Estonia, Germany, Austria and Switzerland as well as being an invited Keynote speaker in many countries worldwide. She was Chair of ATLAS for seven years and has undertaken consultancy work for UNWTO and ETC as well as regional and national projects on cultural and health tourism. She is the author of more than 120 publications.

**Soldic Frleta, Daniela**

University of Rijeka

Croatia

[danielas@fthm.hr](mailto:danielas@fthm.hr)

An assistant Professor at University of Rijeka, teaching Tourism Economics, Sustainable Tourism Development, Tourism Development and Planning, Ecotourism.

**Stevic, Ivana**

University of Aveiro

Portugal

[ivana.stevic87@ua.pt](mailto:ivana.stevic87@ua.pt)

Ivana Stević holds a BSc in Tourism Management from the University of Novi Sad (Serbia), and a MSc in Tourism Management and Planning from the University of Aveiro (Portugal), where she is currently concluding the Doctoral Programme in Tourism. Her research interests include creative and cultural heritage tourism, innovation and entrepreneurship, tourism research methods, creativity and co-creation, experience economy, cultural and creative economies, constructed cultural heritage, and design thinking. She is a member of the Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies (GOVCOPP) and of the organising/executive Committee of INVTUR International Tourism Conference at the University of Aveiro.

**Strzelecka, Marianna**

Linnaeus University

Sweden

[marianna.strzelecka@lnu.se](mailto:marianna.strzelecka@lnu.se)

I am associate professor at Linnaeus University, Sweden. I study socio-cultural aspects of the human-nature relationships within the context of leisure and tourism. At the community level, I study how tourism transforms the social fabric of rural communities and how rural communities 'construct' the surrounding 'nature' and relate to it. On an individual level, I am interested in how people connect with nature and develop a sense of place attachment and place stewardship through leisure and travel.

**Su, Qianfei**

Loughborough University

United Kingdom

[q.su@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:q.su@lboro.ac.uk)

I am a PhD researcher in Social Sciences at Loughborough University, specialising in ethnographic methodologies with a focus on Chinese Studies and Tourism Studies. My research integrates sociology, tourism management, and human geography, employing a mixed-methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques. I aim to explore tourists' mobility within rural tourism destinations and their spatiotemporal behaviour patterns. I am passionate about exploring socio-cultural topics and tourism practices, striving to produce research with meaningful impact.

**Tardivo, Elena**

Independent Researcher

Italy

[elena.tardivo@gmail.com](mailto:elena.tardivo@gmail.com)

Elena Tardivo is an independent scholar in Tourism Studies who explores tourism taking place at catholic churches through an interdisciplinary approach. She holds an MA in Progettazione e Gestione dei Sistemi Turistici from University of Rome - Tor Vergata. She has been involved in the research project ENTOURAGE, investigating old age residents mobilities and their interaction with tourism in the city of Venice, under the supervision of Wilbert den Hoed and Antonio Paolo Russo.

**Tiku, Oscar**

Tohoku University

Japan

[oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp)

**Todd, Louise**

Edinburgh Napier University

United Kingdom

[l.todd@napier.ac.uk](mailto:l.todd@napier.ac.uk)

Dr Louise Todd is an Associate Professor and interim Head of the Tourism and Intercultural Business Communications Subject Group at Edinburgh Napier University. Louise leads the University's Visual Methods and Ethnography Interdisciplinary Research Group and Public Engagement with research in the Business School. Louise's background is in visual art and her practice and research are complementary. Her interests are in arts, cultural tourism and public engagement. She is concerned with visual culture, creative and visual research methods, alongside the potential of festivals and tourism to engage with community stakeholders.

**Tomassini, Lucia**

NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Netherlands

[lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com](mailto:lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com)

Lucia Tomassini (PhD) is a Senior Research Lecturer at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences in Leeuwarden, Netherlands. With a background in architecture and urban planning, an MSc in Urban Development, and a PhD in Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality and, her research interests and expertise encompass the circular economy and circularity in both the physical and sociological spaces of tourism, posthuman approaches in more-than-human societies, and the interplay between

mobilities, spatial theories, and cultural geographies within the context of tourism and leisure. Lucia has established and co-coordinates the ATLAS Special Interest Groups Circular Economy in Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure and Animals in Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure.

**Travis, Emma**

Routledge Publishers

United Kingdom

[emma.travis@tandf.co.uk](mailto:emma.travis@tandf.co.uk)

Emma Travis is Senior Editor at Routledge publishers and publishes books in the areas of tourism, hospitality, events, gastronomy, and food and drink studies. She is always keen to discuss new ideas in emerging cutting-edge areas and more established fields. She welcomes proposals for research monographs, edited collections, handbooks, professional texts, and textbooks, as well as new innovative formats for educators and readers.

**Trisia, Marlisa Ayu**

University of Girona

Spain

[marlisa.trisia@udg.edu](mailto:marlisa.trisia@udg.edu)

Marlisa Ayu Trisia is a researcher at Department of Organization, Business Management and Product Design, Faculty of Tourism, Universitat de Girona, Spain. Currently, her research focuses to explore the role and impact of tourism in rural development through posthumanist and post-growth perspectives—advancing more inclusive, sustainable, and regenerative approaches to rural transformation.

**Tsvilik, Yuliya**

University Rovira i Virgili

Spain

[yuliya.tsvilik@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:yuliya.tsvilik@estudiants.urv.cat)

**Turnsek, Maja**

University of Maribor

Slovenia

[maja.turnsek@um.si](mailto:maja.turnsek@um.si)

Maja Turnsek is Associate Professor at University of Maribor, Faculty of Tourism, Slovenia. She gained her PhD in media and communication studies at the University of Ljubljana. Her research interests cover the intersections of communication, climate change and algorithmic management in tourism. She lectures on communication, psychology and marketing in tourism. Currently, she leads the national research project "The future of social dialogue in the platform economy: The case of Slovenia".

**Valdivieso Riofrio, Juan Carlos**

Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)

Ecuador

[jcvaldivieso@usfq.edu.ec](mailto:jcvaldivieso@usfq.edu.ec)

Education:

2014 Ph.D., Economics and Business - Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya Barcelona Tech, Spain

2012 Visiting Scholar - University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

2010 Advanced Studies Diploma Economics Management and Organization, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

2005 M.A., Leisure Management - EAE, Barcelona, Spain

2005 MBA., Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya Barcelona Tech, Spain

2003 B.A., Finance, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador

2002 B.A. Hospitality Management Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador

PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2019- Director of Institute of Heritage and Sustainable Tourism, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador  
2017-22 Coordinator of Hospitality and Tourism programs, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador  
2014-20 General Manager, Cuatro Vientos, S.C.C. Company specialized in touristic promotion and consultancy Quito, Ecuador  
2014-16 Marketing and fund raising in NGO that helps kids with learning disabilities, FESLA Foundation. Quito, Ecuador  
2010 Teacher Assistant of AEDO, Economic Department, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
2002. Internship, Hospitality and Quality Control in "Sagita" sail boat, Angermeyer Cruises y Andando Tours Galápagos, Ecuador  
HONORS AND ACTIVITIES  
2024 Best professors of the year, Universidad San Francisco de Quito

**Vegas-Macias, Jordi**

Roskilde University

Denmark

[vegas@ruc.dk](mailto:vegas@ruc.dk)

I am a tourism scholar with a background in sustainability-focused studies and sociology. Currently in my third year as a PhD fellow at the Department of Social Sciences and Business at Roskilde University, Denmark, my research explores how tourist-resident encounters shape everyday life and travel experiences in urban settings, with a focus on social value co-creation. My PhD project follows a qualitative research design to conduct a multilevel analysis of social value co-creation practices in Copenhagen, encompassing public services, tourism experiences, and strategic tourism planning in relation to social sustainability.

**Veldman, Jantien**

ATLAS

Netherlands

[jantien.veldman@atlas-euro.org](mailto:jantien.veldman@atlas-euro.org)

**Volo, Serana**

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

Italy

[serena.volo@unibz.it](mailto:serena.volo@unibz.it)

**Waalwijk, Juriaan van**

Breda University of Applied Sciences

Netherlands

[waalwijk.j@buas.nl](mailto:waalwijk.j@buas.nl)

My design and research focus on the dynamic interplay between experiences and storytelling within the leisure domain. I am particularly interested in the societal value found at the intersection of making, measuring, and managing these experiences. My work explores critical questions such as: How can organizations effectively choose stories to tell to their visitors? What strategies enhance engagement in museum installations? What are the core elements of visitor enjoyment in theme park attractions? I am dedicated to balancing these inquiries with the operational realities of businesses and the regulatory frameworks of governments.

My track record includes published research on storytelling as a driver for collaboration in heritage tourism and articles in applied journals on utilizing storytelling in experience design. I bring over ten years of industry experience in the high-traffic sector, leading projects for airports, train stations, theme parks, and museums, primarily at the nexus of experience design and business models. My academic background includes a Bachelor's thesis on storytelling in theme parks and an MBA focused on experience design for organizational transformation.

**Wichupankul, Surarak**

Prince of Songkla University  
Thailand

[surarakstar@gmail.com](mailto:surarakstar@gmail.com)

Surarak Wichupankul is a full-time lecturer at the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Phuket Campus, Thailand. She holds a Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She also earned both her master's and bachelor's degrees in hospitality and tourism management from PSU. Her research interests include destination marketing, tourism and well-being, and tourist sustainable behavior.

**Wright, Angela**

Munster Technological University  
Ireland

[angela.wright@mtu.ie](mailto:angela.wright@mtu.ie)

Dr Angela Wright: SL, Researcher and Director of the MBA (Strategy) at MTU, Cork - Ireland. A board member of ATLAS, she is one of the leads on the newly launched SIG on Artificial Intelligence.

In September 2022, Angela organised and chaired the annual ATLAS Conference at MTU, welcoming 188 delegates from 26 countries and received an ambassador award from Fáilte Ireland for the event at the annual national ceremony.

Giving back is a core principle for Angela and having served as Governor for over 15 years at Fota Wildlife Park in Cork, a major Irish Tourist attraction with full charitable status, she continues to be a member of the Fota company that attracts over 500,000 visitors to the region where she advises on best practice for business and leadership strategy.

**Zaragozí Zaragozí, Benito**

University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain

[benito.zaragozi@urv.cat](mailto:benito.zaragozi@urv.cat)

**Zegers, Kristel**

Breda University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands

[zegers.k@buas.nl](mailto:zegers.k@buas.nl)

Kristel Zegers is a lecturer/researcher connected to the Academy for Leisure and Events of Breda University of Applied Sciences. Her fields of interests are the role of culture in urban development, and how events are positioned within placemaking processes.

**Zerva, Konstantina**

University of Girona  
Spain

[konstantina.zerva@udg.edu](mailto:konstantina.zerva@udg.edu)

Dr. Konstantina Zerva is an Associate Professor and Head of International Relations at the Faculty of Tourism, University of Girona. Her research explores consumer behavior in contexts of social conflict, urban tourism impacts and lifestyle migration, with a strong gender perspective. She has published widely on dark tourism, tourism-phobia and the dynamics between tourism and local communities in cities like Barcelona, Amsterdam and Los Angeles. Currently, she studies interculturality, digital nomadism and migrant women's empowerment. She coordinates the Dark Tourism sub-network of ATLAS and the Mediterranean Tourism sub-network of UNIMED.



## ABSTRACTS

### Pay-What-You-Wish Pricing Model in Designing the Cultural Institution of the Future

Anna Abelson  
New York University  
United States  
[anna.abelson@nyu.edu](mailto:anna.abelson@nyu.edu)

Olena Ciftci

#### Real-World Learning and Application: Case Summary

This pedagogical case study imagines Mike Konzen, Chairman of PGAV Destinations, tasked with designing a sustainable, socially responsible, and profitable pricing strategy for the proposed New Museum of the Future in New York City. The core challenge is whether to adopt a pay-what-you-wish (PWYW) model—a strategy used by major institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City to improve accessibility and inclusivity. The case explores both the benefits and risks of PWYW, drawing on real-world examples to help students analyze its impact on museum image, visitation, financial health, and community engagement. Students craft a tailored strategy for the museum, weighing the advantages of greater accessibility against potential revenue concerns. The scenario fosters critical thinking about balancing financial and social objectives in a dynamic cultural environment.

#### Conceptual and Methodological Approach

The case is grounded in corporate social responsibility (CSR), accessibility, and strategic pricing theories. Designed as a qualitative, exploratory project for undergraduate and graduate courses in tourism, heritage management, and business, it emphasizes real-world data analysis. Students work in groups to review primary sources (museum websites, official statements) and secondary sources (academic literature, industry reports) on PWYW models.

A purposive sampling strategy selects museums with established PWYW or flexible pricing policies. Data analysis involves thematic coding of group presentations and reflections, focusing on the economic, social, and educational impacts of PWYW. This approach enables a nuanced understanding of how pricing shapes both institutional and visitor experiences.

#### Learning and Teaching Objectives

Key objectives include:

Critically evaluate innovative pricing models (especially PWYW) and their implications for accessibility and revenue.

Understand the intersection of financial sustainability, inclusivity, and community engagement in heritage institutions.

Develop strategic analysis, evidence-based decision-making, and professional communication skills through data engagement and peer presentations.

Apply theoretical frameworks (SWOT, Maslow's hierarchy) to real-world heritage management challenges.

#### Assignment Questions:

Choose a PWYW museum: What type is it, how renowned, and what is its brand positioning?

How does the museum communicate PWYW to visitors? What influences this strategy?

How can museums improve PWYW communication to boost visitation and profitability?

Why adopt PWYW? Consider both social and financial motivations.

Under what conditions is PWYW profitable?

Would you recommend PWYW for the New Museum of the Future? Propose and justify a payment model.

### Teaching Strategy

The case is implemented as a group project, with students acting as tourism strategy consultants. Over two to three weeks, groups analyze different PWYW museums, culminating in presentations and class discussions. The professor guides with probing questions and integrates relevant theories, mirroring real-world strategic analysis and decision-making in heritage management. This collaborative, inquiry-based approach fosters active learning and critical thinking, preparing students for professional challenges in the field.

### Educational Findings and Implications

Pilot results show that students develop a nuanced understanding of heritage management complexities. The case encourages critical reflection on balancing accessibility, revenue, and mission. Students learn how pricing strategies affect brand value, community relations, and educational opportunities, and gain practical skills through authentic data analysis. The assignment demonstrates the effectiveness of experiential, inquiry-based learning in equipping students for evolving challenges in heritage tourism and management.

### Implications for Heritage Education and Management

For heritage managers, the case highlights the need for adaptive pricing strategies that balance financial and social goals. PWYW can enhance accessibility and community ownership but requires careful planning to ensure financial sustainability. Clear communication about value and suggested donations is essential to prevent undervaluation. Additional incentives—such as exclusive access or special events—can encourage fair contributions. For educators, integrating real-world challenges and critical reflection into the curriculum is vital. Simulating heritage professionals' decision-making processes helps students develop strategic, ethical, and innovative thinking. This approach is especially relevant as heritage tourism evolves and institutions seek resilience in a changing world.

### Conclusion

This case study on Pay-What-You-Want (PWYW) pricing for the New Museum of the Future offers a rich, multidimensional learning experience. It challenges students to examine the interplay between financial sustainability, social responsibility, and community engagement, equipping them with practical skills for heritage management in the 21st century. Through real-world analysis and collaboration, students develop into thoughtful, innovative leaders in cultural tourism and museum management. An additional element of the project is to identify strategies that can engage and inspire Generation Z to visit cultural institutions.

## **Residents' Attitudes Toward the Saudi Arabian Formula 1 and Its Socio-Cultural Impacts**

*Wael Albogami*

*University of Brighton*

*United Kingdom*

[w.albogami2@uni.brighton.ac.uk](mailto:w.albogami2@uni.brighton.ac.uk)

This presentation seeks to examine the socio-cultural impacts of Formula 1 (F1) on the residents of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia (KSA) and their attitudes towards these effects. Although the impacts of tourism and sporting events on host communities are well studied, much of the research in this area concentrates on Western and Chinese cities. However, there is a significant need for further insights from Arab countries (Hadinejad et al. 2019; Algassim et al. 2021). In contrast to this lack of study in the Arabian context, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC), including Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are experiencing a boom in hosting sporting events, including the Qatar 2022 World Cup and Formula 1 in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Jeddah (Al-Emadi, Sellami & Fadlalla, 2022; Formula 1, 2022). However, the development of tourism and events markets could impact communities in both positive and negative ways, affecting them socially and culturally. Therefore, it is important to understand residents' attitudes towards these impacts, as this also helps



to address the reported gap in the Arabian context of tourism and sporting events. Accordingly, this presentation shows the Jeddah residents' attitudes toward hosting Formula 1 and its socio-cultural impacts. Using a qualitative method, in-depth interviews were conducted with 21 residents, aged 18 and above, men and women, who live near the F1 circuit and in various parts of the city. These participants, who possess differing levels of education and include small business owners near the circuit, are all integral members of the Jeddah community. The presentation anticipates revealing findings at the conference. These findings indicate the event had mixed effects on the residents of Jeddah, promoting inclusion for some while leading to exclusion for others. Therefore, this presentation outlines the research background, gaps, method, findings, and conclusion.

## **Use and rejection of technology in nature-based and cultural tourism visitor experiences**

*Julia N. Albrecht*  
University of Otago  
New Zealand  
[julia.albrecht@otago.ac.nz](mailto:julia.albrecht@otago.ac.nz)

*Stu Hayes*  
[stu.hayes@otago.ac.nz](mailto:stu.hayes@otago.ac.nz)

*Naji Gharibi*  
Te Herenga Waka / Victoria University of Wellington  
New Zealand  
[naji.gharibi@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:naji.gharibi@vuw.ac.nz)

Technology fundamentally alters how tourism products and experiences are delivered and perceived (Cranmer, Urquhart, tom Dieck, & Jung, 2021). Innovations like Virtual and Augmented Reality result in profoundly altered sets of products and experiences (Fang, Jiang, & Deng, 2022) and are still comparatively rare, whereas minor adaptations such as using technical tools within traditional products and experiences (e.g., use of an iPad to show a video pertaining to a site or attraction) are increasingly common (Benckendorff, Xiang, & Sheldon, 2019). The relationship between technology and tourism experiences can be complex and even controversial. For example, technology may negatively impact tourist experiences, especially where motivations relate to escape, personal growth, health & well-being and relationships (Egger et al., 2020) or detachment from experience (e.g., Tanti & Bhualis, 2016). This project explores the use and deliberate non-use of technological advances by tourism businesses in Southern New Zealand with a focus on visitor experience development and delivery (as opposed to technology use in marketing, booking, and visitor communications). It seeks to identify and investigate the attitudes informing the decisions leading to technology use. The spatial focus of the research lies on New Zealand's Lower South Island. This area encompasses several key destination regions such as Aoraki/Mt Cook, the Otago Peninsula, Queenstown/Wanaka, and Fiordland (Milford Sound) and has long played a central role in New Zealand's '100% PURE' image (e.g., Hayes & Lovelock, 2017). In the 12-month prior to October 2023, visitor spend in the regions of the Lower South Island accounted for 15% of all visitor spending in New Zealand (Tourism New Zealand, 2023).

Research participants have been purposely selected to represent providers of nature-based as well as cultural tourism products and experiences. The selection of the two study streams is not informed by a wish to compare and contrast, but to elicit a comprehensive set of findings that reflects tourism products and experiences in the Lower South Island, New Zealand. Our research aims are to:

- 1) obtain an understanding of what technology is used in nature-based and cultural tourism products and experiences, and how, and to
- 2) understand assumptions and attitudes behind the choices informing 1).

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews conducted with tourism business

representatives. Our findings provide a baseline assessment of current technology uses among tourism business in Southern New Zealand. At the same time, our findings provide a better understanding of the perceived benefits and limitations of different technologies for product and/or experience development. In addition, they highlight perceived and actual barriers faced by tourism businesses in relation to the use of technology for product and/or experience development.

## **Cultural festivals: a new opportunity to discover the Italian territory**

*Giulia Alonzo*

*University Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano*

*Italy*

[giulia.alonzo@unicatt.it](mailto:giulia.alonzo@unicatt.it)

*Oliviero Ponte di Pino*

[olivieropdp@gmail.com](mailto:olivieropdp@gmail.com)

### **Background**

Festivals have become a defining feature of Italy's cultural landscape, both in terms of their sheer number and the diverse roles they play. When the TrovaFestival mapping initiative was launched in 2016, the scale of this phenomenon was largely underestimated. By January 2025, over 2,000 festivals had been catalogued, spanning visual arts (112), cinema and audiovisuals (381), cultural enrichment and literature (561), music (472), and live performances (482). These events hold particular significance in a country where cultural consumption levels remain below the European average. Festivals fulfil both individual and collective needs by providing opportunities for cultural enrichment, social interaction, and the revitalisation of public spaces. They also contribute to local economies by boosting tourism, generating employment, and supporting cultural industries. However, festivals face challenges such as commercialisation, gentrification, and environmental impact, highlighting the necessity of sustainable cultural planning. To bridge the gap between festival culture and potential audiences, the travel guide *In giro per festival. Guida nomade agli eventi culturali* was conceived. The first edition, published in 2022 by Altreconomia, presented a curated selection of 100 festivals, with subsequent expanded editions in 2023 and 2024.

### **Methodology**

The guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Italy's festival ecosystem, balancing regional representation and thematic diversity through a proportional analysis based on the schematic evaluation of the TrovaFestival database. Beyond festival listings, it explores the professional and political dimensions of the sector while offering practical travel advice, including recommendations for accommodation and dining. Recognising the challenge of covering only a fraction of Italy's festivals, the guide also includes thematic itineraries and 300 additional festival recommendations across 25 categories. Looking ahead, the 2025 edition will prioritise accessibility, ensuring that cultural experiences are inclusive for a broader audience. These practices have been identified through a questionnaire distributed to the entire TrovaFestival database.

### **Results**

The *In giro per festival* guide has successfully increased awareness and accessibility of Italy's festival culture. Its successive editions have provided travellers with a structured way to navigate the country's rich cultural offerings while promoting sustainable tourism practices. By integrating insights on festival organisation, local heritage, and practical travel logistics, the guide has enhanced cultural engagement and participation. The addition of sustainability and accessibility criteria further reinforces the commitment to making festival culture both environmentally responsible and widely accessible. The ongoing evolution of the guide reflects the dynamic nature of Italy's festival scene and its potential to drive cultural and economic development.

## **Hosting along with increasing restrictions: an ethnographic study of Airbnb hosts in Amsterdam and Barcelona**

*Mar Alsina Folch*  
*Universitat Oberta de Catalunya – UOC*  
*Spain*  
[malsinafo@uoc.edu](mailto:malsinafo@uoc.edu)

*Maartje Roelofsen*  
*Wageningen University & Research*  
*Netherlands*  
[maartje.roelofsen@wur.nl](mailto:maartje.roelofsen@wur.nl)

*Lluís Garay Tamajon*

Almost two decades into its existence, platform Airbnb has evolved into one of the biggest global data firms in the realm of tourism to date. As a broker between providers and renters of short-term rental housing, the platform has significantly shaped urban landscapes as well as residents' livelihoods, impacting the liveability of cities. In doing so, the firm has fuelled ongoing societal debate and activism, a vast body of scholarship, and local and national policymaking concerning the purpose and use of residential property. While laissez-faire policy concerning Airbnb and related platforms still persists in certain countries and localities, most popular tourist destinations have developed tighter regulations with different aims and measures, including Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Barcelona (Spain). Within these cities, Airbnb providers may continue (for now) to operate under certain conditions, such as licencing, guest registration and the requirement to reside on the property during a stay. In this paper presentation, we share results of an ethnographic study of Airbnb hosts in Amsterdam and Barcelona who – with varying degrees of professionalism – have navigated evolving regulatory frameworks during their times as hosts. We question how they look back at their business undertakings over time, how they have adapted to changes made to the platform's own policies and values, and if and how they encounter and respond to such changes through individual or collective action. We discuss several aspects that stood out in our data: 1) the formation of support groups among hosts in their continuous strive to be acknowledged as professional accommodation providers, operating also independently from the platform, 2) the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on their positions as platform entrepreneurs without state support and the related changes these provoked, and 3) host's ambiguous alignment with the platform's values and cultural norms around hospitality. In conclusion we tentatively draw out Airbnb's transformation and (potential) demise in these two cities, bearing in mind recent plans to further phase out short-term rental licenses.

## **Ambition or folly: Re-assessing World Heritage policy and tourism in the Anthropocene**

*Bailey Ashton Adie*  
*University of Oulu*  
*Finland*  
[bailey.adie@oulu.fi](mailto:bailey.adie@oulu.fi)

Conservation and education are key tenants of the UNESCO World Heritage system that have been explicitly present in policy since the Convention's inception in 1972. However, while sustainability and tourism have long been unspoken yet important elements within both national and local-level World Heritage planning, they have only been formally integrated into UNESCO policy in 2015 and 2009 respectively. The direct inclusion of sustainability, and more specifically sustainable development, has arisen due to a push to align World Heritage management systems with the UN SDGs. However, the creation of macro-level aspirational policy often downplays the realities of implementation at national, regional, and local governance levels, in part due to the expectations of what heritage management looks like on the ground. While the World Heritage system is arguably adaptable, there is a large

degree of standardization inherent within the system, which can clash significantly with more local policies and practices. To that end, this work will discuss the complications inherent within the World Heritage policy space. In this context, heritage tourism, and by extension education, must engage in a tenuous balancing act between conservation and sustainable development, which is often unsuccessful dependent on existing policy environments and governance contexts. Building out of this discussion will be a critical debate as to whether the World Heritage Convention remains relevant in our increasingly complex world.

### **Promoting cultural heritage among university students: the Ambassadors program**

*Silvia Aulet*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[silvia.aulet@udg.edu](mailto:silvia.aulet@udg.edu)

*Dolors Vidal*  
*Silvia Grau*

This Student Ambassadors of Catalan Cultural Heritage program is an innovative initiative coordinated by the University of Girona (UdG) in collaboration with the Catalan Agency for Cultural Heritage. The project connects international academic mobility with the dissemination of Catalan cultural heritage, engaging both outgoing and incoming university students as active promoters of heritage. Its core objective is to foster intercultural dialogue and awareness through direct student involvement in heritage experiences and communication.

The program operates in two directions. Outgoing Catalan students participating in mobility programs (such as Erasmus+, Sèneca or Prometeu) are trained before departure and asked to present elements of Catalan cultural heritage to their host institutions abroad. Their activities include presentations, workshops, interactive games, and culinary demonstrations, often reaching diverse academic communities. Meanwhile, incoming international students at UdG are offered immersive cultural experiences, including guided visits to lesser-known heritage sites—such as the Iberian city of Ullastret, the rock art of El Cogul, and the Carthusian monastery of Escaladei. They are encouraged to share their reflections through social media, contributing to broader visibility of Catalonia's heritage beyond iconic or over-visited landmarks.

The project has run for two years. In the first edition (2023-2024), 23 students (10 outgoing and 13 incoming) have actively participated in the program; in the second edition (2024–2025) the program involved 22 students (10 outgoing, 12 incoming) from 12 countries and 10 universities across four continents.

To assess the impact of the program on student participants, both incoming and outgoing students were asked to produce a personal report or reflective diary documenting their experiences throughout the project. In addition, focus groups and follow-up meetings were conducted to gain deeper qualitative insights into their learning process, emotional connection with heritage, and intercultural exchange. For incoming students, specific questionnaires were also developed to evaluate each field visit. To analyse the communication impact on the visibility of the visited heritage sites, several tools were implemented, including the creation of an official Instagram account and the monitoring of social media activity through designated project hashtags.

The results demonstrate a positive impact on both the promotion of heritage and the training of participants. Outgoing students reported a reinforced sense of cultural identity and improved public communication skills. Incoming students expressed surprise and appreciation for the richness and variety of Catalan heritage. Their testimonies highlight how direct experience, expert guidance and interaction with local heritage professionals contributed to a deeper understanding of the territory. The social media campaign generated more than 9,400 views and 1,400 interactions, extending the project's reach to a global audience. Participants also suggested improvements, such as including intangible heritage, promoting interaction between local and international students, and extending field visits to overnight stays to enhance immersion.

This program represents an innovative initiative at the intersection of education, tourism and cultural heritage, offering a replicable model in other regions and universities. Its continuity and expansion could consolidate Catalonia as a reference destination in academic and cultural tourism, in addition to contributing to the internationalization of its heritage.

### **The Implementation of the Delos Initiative (IUCN) in Montsant Natural Park: Preserving Protected Areas Through Nature's Spiritual Values**

*Silvia Aulet*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[silvia.aulet@udg.edu](mailto:silvia.aulet@udg.edu)

*Montserrat Sola*

*Ricard Fernández*  
[excursionisme@gdm.cat](mailto:excursionisme@gdm.cat)

The Montsant Natural Park, covering 9,242 hectares, has intangible values as one of its strengths. The toponym refers to the sacred nature of this landscape, which has housed both monasteries and hermits. The eleven municipalities that have part of their surface included in the protected area also share the link with the mountain through gatherings and pilgrimages in the various chapels scattered throughout the Natural Park.

These simple chapels play a key role in the identity of each village, reinforcing the sense of community of its inhabitants. Montsant is a natural space considered sacred by local populations. A 2008 IUCN Congress resolution highlighted the close relationship between spirituality and sacred natural spaces, stressing the need for local community involvement in their management. The Delos Initiative (IUCN) aims to highlight the importance and significance of sacred natural sites of the technologically developed world, and to assess how spiritual values can contribute to the conservation and good use of important areas of natural interest focusing on the study of protected natural spaces that have recognized spiritual values, beyond the local level.

A major step in this initiative was the first Delos workshop in Montserrat (2006), one of the world's most iconic sacred landscapes, near Montsant, which two years later became also subject of study. The recommendations that emerged are the reason for this communication, as well as their application by the Park management team.

Many of the recommendations are based on the valorisation of hermitism, both ancient and contemporary, the legacy of the monasteries present in the history of the massif and popular devotion as an identity tool. An interesting proposal is the use of balmes (natural rocky enclosures traditionally used as dwellings for hermits) as anti-stress shelters. Currently, Protected Natural Areas (PNA) around the world are developing programs based on the link between Nature and Health. Multiple scientific studies from various disciplines support the salutogenic nature of Nature, granting the PNAs a value of high social interest.

The use of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (EUROPARC) becomes an efficient tool to put into practice the promotion of the intangible values of PNAs through local operators, strongly involved in the custody and preservation of the environment. The Manual 10 for the incorporation of spiritual and intangible values in the management of PNAs (EUROPARC Spain), is also a valuable resource. The Montsant Natural Park has made a strong commitment in this regard.

In this context, research will be carried out on the application of the Delos Initiative in the Montsant Natural Park, analysing how its principles have been integrated into the management of the protected area. The study will pay special attention to the impact that these measures have had on the tourism sector, assessing the development of a sustainable model that respects the intangible and spiritual values of the territory. In addition, the degree of involvement of the different agents and the local community in the development of this initiative will be examined.



## Storytelling Power in Tourism Advertising: Enhancing Destination Image and Reducing Perceived Risk

Yasmin Babalou  
Lewis University  
United States  
[vbabalou@staugustine.lewisu.edu](mailto:vbabalou@staugustine.lewisu.edu)

Amirhossein Maleki

In the competitive tourism industry, advertising plays a crucial role in shaping travelers' decisions by influencing destination image and perceived risk, two key factors that drive behavioral intentions (Susanti et al., 2023). While previous research has examined the impact of marketing strategies on tourism demand, fewer studies have explored the role of storytelling as a persuasive communication tool for destinations with negative reputations. This study investigates how narrative versus non-narrative advertising formats influence travelers' perceptions and contribute to sustainable tourism development.

Storytelling, as a form of narrative advertising, engages audiences by creating emotional connections, enhancing memory retention, and fostering narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Hover et al., 2021). In contrast, non-narrative advertisements present destination information in a factual, expository manner without character-driven or immersive elements. Research suggests that emotionally compelling narratives reshape perceptions more effectively than purely informational content (Hover et al., 2021; Yung et al., 2021), yet little is known about how these formats influence risk perception and destination image in the context of sustainable tourism.

To address this gap, this study applies narrative transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000) in a 2x2 experimental design with 255 participants, comparing the effects of narrative and non-narrative advertisements on perceptions of Iran, a destination often perceived as high-risk. Participants were exposed to either a story-driven advertisement, designed to evoke emotional engagement through cultural and personal storytelling, or a fact-based advertisement that conveyed the same destination information without narrative elements. A control group received no advertisement exposure.

Findings reveal that narrative advertisements significantly enhance both cognitive and affective destination image, reduce perceived risk, and increase behavioral intentions more effectively than non-narrative formats. Storytelling fosters greater immersion and trust, which are critical for reshaping perceptions of under-visited destinations and promoting long-term tourism sustainability. By improving destination appeal and diversifying tourism flows, narrative-driven advertising supports community-based tourism, alleviates pressure on over-touristed areas, and enhances resilience for destinations facing reputational challenges. These findings extend existing research on the persuasive power of storytelling (Sama, 2019) and underscore its strategic importance in tourism development.

Beyond theoretical contributions, this study provides actionable insights for destination marketers, tourism boards, and policymakers. It demonstrates how narrative-based communication can counter negative perceptions, foster authentic engagement, and drive sustainable tourism growth through more inclusive and emotionally resonant messaging.

## **Carnivals stimulating collective effervescence and place identity in the Anthropocene**

*Fiona Eva Bakas*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[fionabakas@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:fionabakas@edu.ulisboa.pt)

*Stella Kladou*  
*Maria Psimouli*

Responding to the ATLAS Call for Papers that explore festivals' social value, this research focuses on carnivals' potential to drive social transformation by fostering connections to place and heritage and reinforcing community cohesion. In the Anthropocene era, which reflects current human-environment relationships, attention has been drawn to the importance of community resilience (Cheer et al., 2019). Carnivals that are community-led, can strategically be organised to achieve goals of social sustainability for visitors and residents in marginalised areas (Bakas et al., 2024). However, less is known about how this occurs, although some research indicates that it is via the creation of social utility by promoting inclusive social cohesion amongst residents, residents-visitors and visitors-artists as seen in small-scale art festivals in Portugal featuring creative tourism experiences (Bakas et al., 2019). The context of this events research is crucial, as in marginalised areas there are different challenges than in urban contexts. Events held in urban areas may face problems relating to the contested use of public spaces creating tensions and disputes (McGillivray et al., 2022), inequities in visitors and resident's experiences and economic loss (Smith et al., 2021) which are rarely applicable in small-scale, rural/small city contexts. Carnivals in particular are events that can give rise to collective effervescence among participants, which is a highly spatially clustered phenomenon, associated with the social-morphological feature of being in a crowd of people (Liebst, 2019). This can be an empowering episode of collective action, during which people alter their demeanour and social relations to express behaviour and views that most of the time are not publicly articulated (Barker, 1999). Collective effervescence is also understood as the combination of feeling connected to others and a sensation of sacredness (Gabriel et al., 2020).

In this research, we examine how collective effervescence, created within carnivals contribute to sense of place (Chen et al., 2021), that is a particular attachment to an area. Place is used as a concept to explore how carnival participants ascribe meaning to their physical and social surroundings. In an era of rapidly changing meanings of place due to our hypermobile lifestyles, we stipulate that carnivals can help create a sense of place by stimulating ritual place-making via shared experiences of atmosphere during collective live events, resulting in lively expressions of collective effervescence (Hill et al., 2021).

To analyse this relationship, we draw on empirical data created in two case studies comprising of ethnographic research and mini-video recordings conducted in small-scale, community-led carnivals, one in Gois, Portugal and one in Amfissa, Greece in 2023. Two of the authors who are local to the carnivals conducted participant observation in 2023 and regularly participated in the carnival for the past 4 years. Via lived experiences they describe the carnival culture through sensing and reflection while submersed in the respective local communities (O'Gorman et al., 2014). In addition, random festival participants (both locals and tourists) answered questions in Greek and Portuguese, which were recorded in mini-videos, transcribed and translated into English by the authors who speak the corresponding languages.

Preliminary analysis of the knowledge created in the two, geographically distinct case studies, points to the emergence of a framework to investigate the role of carnivals in creating a sense of place, and ultimately in place branding, through the lens of collective effervescence. Findings indicate that collective effervescence can foment positive connections to place for tourists and renewed recognition of the value of place for locals. An emerging framework suggests that community-led carnivals can serve as a platform for local communities to re-define and share their own authentic sense of place, contributing to place identity and thus leveraging tourism as a tool for community support, regeneration and development.



## Participatory mapping for cultural tourism: the landscape observatory of Fiastra Valley, Italy

*Benedetta Baldassarre*  
*University of Bologna*  
*Italy*  
[benedetta.baldassarre@unibo.it](mailto:benedetta.baldassarre@unibo.it)

*Claudia de Luca*  
[claudia.deluca5@unibo.it](mailto:claudia.deluca5@unibo.it)

*Matteo Giacomelli*  
[matteo.giacomelli@polimi.it](mailto:matteo.giacomelli@polimi.it)

*Simona Bravaglieri*  
[simona.bravaglieri@unibo.it](mailto:simona.bravaglieri@unibo.it)

Cultural tourism is emerging in rural areas as an exciting opportunity for economic revitalization and socio-cultural regeneration. Visitors are mainly interested in having authentic, grass-rooted experiences and discovering historical heritage, local traditions, food and creative arts, while enjoying unique natural sites. This opens new challenges around the need to value cultural and natural resources in these territories to make them attractive, while preserving rural identities and ensuring sustainable experiences for tourists. In front of such new rural landscape dynamics, a visionary planning and responsible, integrated land and heritage management are required for preserving ecological balance, protecting local heritage, and prioritizing community needs, while increasing regional income in rural destinations. Landscape observatories represent a strategic, valuable tool to facilitate continuous monitoring of landscapes and enabling both institutional and community-based practices for landscape planning and management, as well as for sustainable cultural tourism development.

This contribution presents a participatory cultural mapping workshop carried out in six small historical villages in the province of Macerata (Marche region, Italy), as part of the activities of the landscape observatory of the Fiastra Valley. The overall aim of the workshop was to identify and map cultural and natural resources recognized as relevant for the local identity and as potential tourism attractions. By following a product-based approach, the cultural tourism types they can foster have been framed. Such place-based activity provides a frame of the existing tangible and intangible cultural assets, and a community-shared narrative about the place's identity, which can inform more sustainable, careful and respectful heritage-based planning processes.

The results of the participatory workshop have strengthened the idea that framing cultural tourism is primarily a local community affair, which requires the engagement of stakeholders and inhabitants to ensure a more integrated cultural tourism development and management. In this perspective, the study has also confirmed the pivotal role that local landscape observatories can play as support decision instrument, connecting decision-makers, practitioners, civil society, researchers, and the economic sector towards a more sustainable landscape planning.

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## Blue Tourism and Climate Change: Building Resilience in Mediterranean Coastal Destinations

*Giulia Balestracci*

*Rovira i Virgili University*

*Spain*

[giulia.balestracci@gmail.com](mailto:giulia.balestracci@gmail.com)

Coastal and maritime tourism, also referred to as blue tourism, represents at least 50 % of all global tourism. They are among the oldest segments of this industry and have profoundly evolved in the last century (Tonazzini et al, 2019), with a massification throughout the three 'S' model in coastal areas (Miller, 1991). The Mediterranean area is the first tourism region worldwide, concentrating 30 % of the tourist flow with more than 400 million international tourist arrivals annually. Approximately half of those are in its coastal areas, particularly during summer (Plan Blue, 2022).

Competitiveness factors for blue destinations include climate and coastal and marine ecosystem quality. There exists a strong interdependence between tourism, climate, and biodiversity. The main tourism environmental impacts on littorals are coast artificialization, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Climate change could have significant implications in the medium and long term, such as a decrease in destination attractiveness (Fosse et al., 2021) due to coastal erosion and drought - evident in the Mediterranean coastline. Also, climate change affects tourism seasonality, making the Mediterranean a more attractive tourist destination in the spring and autumn (Roson et al, 2014).

In this two-way relationship, tourism is particularly sensitive to impacts caused by climate change (Scott et al., 2012) and, on the other hand, one that contributes most towards it and greenhouse gas emissions (Peeters et al 2023). Tourism is responsible for 8 % of global GHG emissions (UNEP 2019); of those, 75% are attributed to air transportation to reach the destination (TPCC 2023), while the rest are related to internal mobility, accommodation, and affiliated activities (López Palomeque et al., 2022a). In the Mediterranean, aviation experienced a 50% increase in passengers between 2005 and 2018, and so did the emissions of cities with airports (Dayan et al, 2017).

This article seeks to conceptualise blue tourism and its connection to climate change in coastal destinations. Drawing on the case of the Mediterranean coastline, it underscores the necessity for sustainable blue tourism planning to incorporate adaptation and resilience strategies that focus on addressing climate risk conditions. Furthermore, it emphasises the significant role that collaborative blue tourism governance can play.

The literature review examines research topics, while institutional and governmental sources are investigated to comprehend the governance actions undertaken across various Mediterranean scales. Simultaneously, the author's direct involvement in projects related to the Mediterranean blue tourism sector allows for the use of updated sectoral data and GIS maps. This also contributes to the outcomes of this research while fostering collaborations with networks (e.g., BlueNetCat in Barcelona, IMPETUS in Tarragona) dedicated to governance actions aimed at enhancing tourism and climate resilience in Mediterranean coastal destinations.

The main results underscore the importance of understanding the fragmented sector scenario and the urgent need for adaptation policies within an integrated Mediterranean tourism framework, which includes low-carbon tourism products. Building resilience is a fundamental strategy, particularly for coastal destinations that are especially vulnerable to risks, as they are heavily reliant on a healthy tourism sector.

## ***Homo Ludens* Performing Sameness in the Age of Originality: The Leaning Tower of Pisa as a Stage for Transient Tourist Heritage**

*Nika Balomenou*  
*Swansea University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk)

*F. Boy*  
*Brian Garrod*  
*A. Kyparissis*  
*N. Micallef*  
*J. Morgan*  
*A. Panayiotopoulos*

This paper introduces the concept of transient tourist heritage, a form of intangible heritage created and perpetuated by tourists through playful, ritualistic practices at iconic sites. Focusing on the Leaning Tower of Pisa, we explore the methodological and theoretical implications of studying tourist practices as heritage. Methodologically, we employ a multi-layered approach, combining historical photo analysis, social media data sweeps, and on-site observations to trace the evolution of the "holding up the tower" pose from its early documentation in 1944 to its viral spread on platforms like Instagram. Theoretically, we propose a concentric circuit model that integrates Huizinga's "magic circle of play" at its core, Siegel's "circle of self-representation" on social media, and Johnson's "circuit of culture" to explain how tourists choose, perform, and share these rituals. This model highlights the interplay between playful interaction, digital representation, and cultural influence in shaping transient heritage. By examining the role of digital platforms in amplifying these rituals, we demonstrate how social media fosters a global community of practice, challenging traditional notions of heritage as static and place-bound. This paper contributes to the broader discourse on heritage studies by offering a new framework for understanding how tourist practices, when repeated and shared, evolve into a form of transient heritage that is both ephemeral and enduring. Through this lens, we provide fresh insights into the intersection of tourism, heritage, and digital culture.

## **Mainstreaming Visual Research in Tourism Studies: Ethical Frameworks and Criteria for Research Efficacy**

*Nika Balomenou*  
*Swansea University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:nika.balomenou@swansea.ac.uk)

*Brian Garrod*  
*Peter Burns*  
*Aggelos Panayiotopoulos*  
*Stefanie Benjamin*  
*Robert Bowen*  
*Carl Cater*  
*Melissa Cummings*  
*Pheroza Daruwalla*  
*Karen Davies*  
*Johan Edelheim*  
*Joanne Edney*  
*William Feighery*  
*Sarah Frankel*  
*Francesc Fusté-Forné*  
*Allan Jepson*  
*Simon Kimber*  
*Maggie Miller*  
*Sabina Owsianowska*  
*André Riani Costa Perinotto*  
*Felicity Picken*  
*Heather Skinner*  
*Sarah Snell*  
*Louise Todd*  
*Nina Willment*  
*Theres Winter*  
*Isabella Ye*

Visual experiences are central to tourism, shaping both consumer experiences and socio-cultural phenomena. Despite the inherently visual nature of tourism, research practices have struggled to fully embrace visual methodologies due to a lack of clear ethical frameworks and criteria for assessing research efficacy. This paper addresses these gaps by proposing a reflexive ethical framework and robust criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of visual research in tourism. The ethical framework addresses contemporary challenges such as privacy, consent, representation, and the use of emerging technologies like AI and drones, while the criteria for research efficacy combine established paradigmatic standards with tourism-specific visual considerations. These guidelines are designed to move beyond questions of legitimacy and provide practical tools for researchers, reviewers, and ethics committees.

A key innovation introduced in this paper is the creation of the ATLAS Visual Methods in Tourism Research Database, a centralised resource for cataloguing and categorising visual tourism research publications. This database will serve as a living repository, enabling researchers to upload and share their work, while facilitating the ongoing refinement of ethical and methodological guidelines. By fostering a dynamic, collaborative research community, this paper aims to promote the mainstreaming of visual research in tourism studies, ensuring its ethical and effective implementation.

## Assessing The Sustainability Practices of The Camino Francés Through Visual Ethnographic Methods

Christopher Aaron Barnes  
Edinburgh Napier University  
Scotland, United Kingdom  
[christopher.barnes@napier.ac.uk](mailto:christopher.barnes@napier.ac.uk)

The transition from ancient pilgrimage to tourism phenomena calls for critical analysis of the sustainability practices of those who participate and host pilgrimage (Murray, 2014).

I will present aspects of my PhD research which assesses the sustainability practices of pilgrims and host communities, on The Camino Francés, using an ethnographic methodology and visual methods. The Camino De Santiago, primarily located in Spain, is one of the largest and oldest pilgrimages in the western world (Raq and Morpeth, 2022). The Camino Francés, a tributary route of the greater Camino's network of trails, facilitates around 60% of its pilgrims annually (Stevens, 2023). My methodology involved ethnographic immersion as a pilgrim. In July 2023, I trekked 850 kilometres to conduct a qualitative study of pilgrims and hosts in the five jurisdictional regions of The Camino Francés: The Pyrenees' France and Navarre, Rioja, Castile y Leon and Galicia, Spain. My data collection incorporated utilisation of an array of visual ethnographic methods. These were ethnographic sketch journaling, keeping a photographic diary via social media and were supported by on-location semi-structured interviews.

Visual images and technologies used by researchers during fieldwork must be appropriate and should develop as part of social relationship building (Pink 2007). In the context of my research, ethnographic visual methods offered the combination of accessibility and desirability, when considering aspects of sustainability practices and perceptions of individuals. Researching with visual methods was appropriate, due to it involving individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Pink, 2007). Visual methods such as photography and journaling, presents an inclusive method of attaining personal and sensitive data (Rose, 2022). Furthermore, my selected visual methods, supported the documenting of my own lived experience, including reflections on my sustainable choices and my observations of others.

Organisationally, it has no official organiser or owner (Brumec et al., 2023). Thus, distinct political regions market The Camino within their domains. Visual methods allowed for consistent and reliable recording of data, across all these regions in an un-inhibiting and non-divisive way. Rakić and Chambers (2012) argue that visual methods can play a central role in allowing researchers to access and create knowledge about phenomena which cannot be as readily accessed. Visual methods were therefore particularly useful in capturing data. The different regions of the pilgrimage hold diverse cultural identities yet share the common bond of promoting the pilgrimage. Journaling and photography enabled my findings, firstly by recording my first-hand witnessing of sustainability practices. Secondly, they visually recorded the available resources and amenities accessible to pilgrims across the regions, and noticeable differences in each location.

O'Regan et al. (2019) determines, analysing visual materials, against interview data, enables researchers to generate new and unique insights into diverse cultures. The Camino still possesses religious significance to certain pilgrims, and secular tourism motives of participation for others (Sanchez y Sanchez and Hesp, 2016). Consequently, thematic analysis of transcripts from interviews provide insight from a range of individuals. Analysis of imagery I encountered, or sketches I created on location, supported these responses cohesively. I will conclude by reflecting on how the use of visual methods in my research ignited participant curiosity and interest, resulting in their participation. This led to socially constructed recommendations, which in turn positively impacted on the sustainability of The Camino Francés for future generations in a more collaborative way.

## **Bridging the Gap to Greener Tourism: Individual Barriers to Sustainable Transport Choices**

*Jana Bartová*  
Masaryk University  
Czech Republic  
[jana.bartova@econ.muni.cz](mailto:jana.bartova@econ.muni.cz)

*Markéta Novotná*  
[marketa.novotna@econ.muni.cz](mailto:marketa.novotna@econ.muni.cz)

Since tourism-related mobility negatively affects destinations significantly, there is a need to look for elements of sustainable mobility for tourists (Gross and Grimm, 2018). To properly set up sustainable transport, it is essential to know the factors influencing transport choice (Gross and Grimm, 2018). Such factors include personal characteristics, stay characteristics, socio-demographics, and purpose of travel, all of which enter modal choice as individual barriers. The paper will explore tourists' willingness to shift to greener transport in the context of the purpose of the trip, as well as individual barriers and attitudes to this shift. The train is one of the more sustainable modes of transport that can be used to reduce the carbon footprint of a tourist journey. Any train, especially the high-speed rail (HSR), can be a substitute for a plane between two cities (Pagliara et al., 2012). The potential of HSR can only be evaluated if tourists' behaviour and preferences are known (Šauer et al., 2024). For this reason, one of this paper's new contributions and insights is the tourist's perspective on the choice of transport mode, evaluating decision-making processes and what individual barriers and attitudes enter the choice process. Research often neglects subjective factors on mode choice, while the influence of price is constantly discussed. In this paper, subjective factors will be included, as well as the influence of technology, which is also often missing. To collect data for this research, it draws inspiration from the methodology of Behrens and Pels (2012). Authors Behrens and Pels (2012) investigated individual barriers to switching from air travel to HSR using economic experiments with hypothetical scenarios. We will use the method of choice experiments, where we present respondents with different scenarios with combinations of attributes. We have several levels of attributes, i.e. factors influencing modal choice. Using orthogonal design, we can define the smallest possible number of scenarios. Subsequently, each respondent completes one questionnaire with only a few scenarios. Respondents then select their preferred mode of transport. This method will allow us to quantify the influence of each factor on passengers' decision-making. To obtain a representative sample, we will conduct a field survey at tourist sites with high concentrations of people. It is expected that there will be differences between the factors influencing modal choice. Different groups of travellers based on their socio-demographic characteristics have different key elements in decision-making. For a family with children it may be price, for a young couple it may be environmental responsibility, or for a business traveller it may be time. So, there are different factors influencing modal choice for different groups of travellers.



## On the relationship of locals with sea turtles on Providence Island, Colombia

*Narcís Bassols i Gardella*  
Uppsala University  
Sweden  
[narcis.bassols@angstrom.uu.se](mailto:narcis.bassols@angstrom.uu.se)

*Daniel Calderón Ramírez*  
[daniel.calderon@uexternado.edu.co](mailto:daniel.calderon@uexternado.edu.co)

*Juan Esteban Castellanos López*  
*Leonardo Garavito González*

This presentation delves into the changing relationship of a community who lives with wild animals in the context of nature protection and tourism development. Specifically, we study the case of how the local community on Providence Island are shifting their gaze towards sea turtles, a protected species. We report about an ongoing process which we could sum up as “from the sea to the plate, and away from the plate on to tourist icon”.

Sea turtles are considered by ecologists “umbrella species”, i.e., species who benefit the ecosystem far beyond their own needs, and their presence signals a healthy environment. As the colonial era started, and Providence became inhabited, turtles became part of the locals’ diet so turtle soup is still today a local dish on the island.

In recent years, climate change has resulted in some heavy tropical storms hitting the island, particularly the storms Eta and Iota in 2020, which left behind an unprecedented level of destruction. This has resulted into a harder life for the turtles due to the changed configuration of the beaches, which makes egg laying a risky business: the reduced beach surface means that eggs are laid in humid areas close to the water and, as a consequence, they rotten.

A new stakeholder has recently come up whose task is safeguarding the reproduction cycle of the turtles and educating the local population about them: the Huxbill Foundation, created in 2018. While ‘protecting’ nesting areas or hand-rearing egg clutches may be seen as ‘reactive’ conservation, the Foundation takes an active stance in educating the population about the ecosystemic value of turtles. The largest bet of the Foundation, however, is developing scientific tourism based on the turtles in order to guarantee their survival and making them truly valuable to locals. In this respect, a recent project funded by the Colombian government was carried out, which built the foundations for Providence to become a “scientific tourism” destination, with the local community managing tourism. Visitors will be invited to collect data about the turtles and a group of locals has been trained as nature guides with a special knowledge on turtles.

Elevating the turtles to “icons” of the natural tourism on Providence may be the solution to illegal hunting and revert the gaze of the locals towards them as has been done in other places with other species. While animals’ consideration as “icons” is not uncontroversial, the potential of “turtle tourism” seems like a promise for more conscientious visitors arriving to the island, for locals to get more benefits from tourism and for the industry to upgrade. All these processes are highly dynamic and ongoing.

The methodology used for this research is semi-structured interviews with selected members of the local community. Through them, the current situation of turtle protection, the cultural appreciation of this animal and the efforts to develop scientific tourism will be assessed.

The first results show a high interest for a development of scientific tourism, though many different, unexpected facets come up, so this is a mid-term goal development requiring a broad cooperation among all local stakeholders.



## Tourism and Liveable Cities: a Scoping Review

*Melese Belay*  
*University of West London*  
*United Kingdom*  
[melese.belay@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:melese.belay@uwl.ac.uk)

*Cristina Maxim*  
*Alexandros Paraskevas*

Over the past half-century, the ‘Liveable Cities’ concept has gained significant attention in research and policy discussions. Although liveability originally promised to challenge economic growth paradigms, recent studies show that the term has evolved and is now understood in multifaceted ways (Ahmed et al., 2019; Lloyd et al., 2016).

This study employed a scoping review to critically engage with current conceptualizations and debates about tourism and liveability within the academic literature. Peer-reviewed articles published in Scopus-indexed journals were collected and reviewed until October 16, 2024. The search terms used were “urban AND livability”, “urban AND liveability”, “tourism AND livability”, and “tourism AND liveability” in the title, abstract, or keywords. Besides ensuring the inclusion of all relevant studies, these search words were developed to enable the authors to look into how liveability is broadly conceptualized in cognate disciplines, mainly in urban studies and urban geography, before narrowing it down to the specifics of the tourism literature. To enhance methodological rigor and traceability of the process, the review is reported based on the Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guideline developed by Tricco et al. (2018). The initial query in the mentioned database produced a total of 1659 records, of which 144 articles published between 1980 and 2024 were retained after screening.

We applied an inductive thematic analysis to review, identify, and develop themes from the data. Six key approaches have emerged through this process that are relevant to understanding the extant field of liveability and its conceptualization in tourism studies. The first approach is liveability as a human-centric concept that prioritizes residents’ quality of life and well-being in modern cities. This perspective traces its origin to the post-war periods of the 1950s and 1960s, when the concept of liveable cities first gained prominence. The second theme that emerged from the data is the rise of neoliberalism and a shift in liveability’s conceptualization, specifically from the 1980s onwards. At the core of neoliberalism is the opening of new markets, which intensifies competition among cities to attract global investment and capital. This, in turn, was consequential in redefining ‘liveable’ urban spaces worldwide, forming one theme in this review. The third approach offers critical perspectives on the very concept of liveable cities and the delivery of its quality of life promises to residents. The literature in this category rather raised new problems of social justice stemming from power imbalances and inequalities over the production and use of ‘liveable’ urban spaces. The fourth theme constitutes the findings from tourism research and their simplistic view of the concept that lacks a deeper theoretical reflection. While existing tourism studies are generally empirical, they narrowly approached the concept either from its economic value or tourism’s negative impacts on the urban life. Fifth, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed the research landscape on urban liveability, particularly in urban studies. This is proven in the rise of the average annual publication rate, which increased from around 5.3 between 2013 and 2018 to 10.2 between 2019 and 2024. As a result, studies that were published since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic appeared as a separate thematic focus of this study. Finally, the sixth theme is about measurement that reflects the approaches and ongoing debates to measuring urban liveability both within and across the disciplines of tourism and urban studies.

We also highlighted knowledge gaps in the tourism literature that need an interdisciplinary lens to gain insights and transfer theories already known in cognate disciplines. One key yet overlooked aspect of liveable cities in the context of tourism is the lack of critical engagement with spatial practices and the transformation of ‘liveable’ urban spaces in the context of tourist cities. In addition, the connection between the built environment and the quality of urban life for diverse user groups warrants further examination, which has become even more apparent following the outbreak of the COVID-19

pandemic. While existing liveability indicators primarily focus on objective quantification, subjective indicators remain understudied. Addressing this gap could pave the way for a more comprehensive approach to measuring liveability in tourist cities.

### **How large is the destination system of Venice? A big data approach**

*Dario Bertocchi*  
*University of Udine*  
*Italy*  
[dario.bertocchi@uniud.it](mailto:dario.bertocchi@uniud.it)

A tourist destination extends beyond administrative boundaries and is closely tied to the perceptions of tourists and day-trippers, who define the tourist territory. So, how large is the tourist destination system of Venice? From the municipality's perspective, it extends within the administrative borders of the metropolitan city; for the region, Venice encompasses the entire regional territory (examples of tourism promotion include the Dolomites, marketed as Venice's mountains; the province of Treviso, described as Venice's gardens; Caorle, promoted as the "small Venice"; and the northern Adriatic coast, referred to as "Venice's beach"). But what do visitors to the historic city think? Or rather, what does their behaviour reveal about how the boundaries of the destination can be defined?

Using high-frequency data from mobile phone cells, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of "hit-and-run" visitors—day-trippers who visit Venice for just a few hours during a day trip. Do they return to their place of residence? And most importantly, what behaviours do foreign visitors exhibit?

The findings present maps illustrating the behaviors of so-called "false day-trippers"—individuals (mainly foreigners) who visit Venice for a single day but stay overnight in nearby municipalities such as Padua, Treviso, Cavallino Treporti, and even Cortina d'Ampezzo.

These results prompt several reflections: How can these flows be controlled and managed? Is there a way to coordinate between municipalities? Should taxation measures (such as the tourist tax and access contribution) be reconsidered?

### **Development of Sustainable Wine Tourism: Evaluating Economic, Social, and Environmental Impacts on Rural Local Communities**

*Darya Boronilo*  
*University Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[daryaboronilo916@gmail.com](mailto:daryaboronilo916@gmail.com)

This research, in regard to its economic, social, and environmental impacts, attempts to understand sustainable wine tourism in rural local communities. Admittedly, the wine tourism activity may be said to have economic and cultural effects, but little integrated research has been found to address the social dynamics, community interaction, and environmental impacts involved. The study aims to close the above gaps by focusing on three main research questions: (1) What ways will sustainable wine tourism support the economic development of the locality? (2) What social impacts would be presupposed to include empowerment of the community, cultural heritage, and social cohesion? and, (3) What environmental changes are induced by wine tourism and their consequences to the local ecosystem?

Such an investigation employs a broad range of methodologies, including both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The methods for data collection include questionnaires filled out by wine tourists, residents, and stakeholders; semi-structured interviews of winery owners, community leaders, and tourism professionals; site inspections in wineries and tourist attractions. Case studies evaluate paradigmatic wine tourism destinations like Mendoza (Argentina) and Georgia for context-specific insights into the complexities of sustainable wine tourism. The data is analyzed for patterns, trends, and narratives via

thematic and statistical examination with respect to the economic, social, and environmental axes. Results of the analysis are validated through stakeholder workshops and co-designing activities regarding sustainability.

Initial results suggest that sustainable wine tourism is able to instigate economic growth by generating employment and diversifying the economic activities in rural areas. This growth is, however, related to increasing living costs and the potential side-lining of traditional agricultural production. The possibility of empowering communities, keeping cultural heritage alive, and enhancing social cohesion via wine tourism depends on effective community involvement and management. Accordingly, while sustainable wine tourism can promote environmental conservation, it can just as soon drain natural resources and biodiversity if managed poorly.

The theoretical frameworks that undergird this research include Triple Bottom Line (TBL), Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), and Stakeholder Theory that offer a strong foundation from which to analyze the sustainability of wine tourism destinations. Also discussed in this research is the use of digitalization and new tools in furtherance of sustainability practice: This is a void in the literature requiring urgent attention.

This research, in an integrated examination of the economic, social, and environmental aspects, lends credence towards developing a holistic sustainable wine tourism approach. It presents operational recommendations for policymakers, the industry, and local residents to facilitate rural development while achieving the sustainability targets. Networking governance, community engagement, and state-of-the-art practices in assuring the sustainable longevity of wine tourism sites are reinforced by the study results.

This research furthers theoretical knowledge on sustainable wine tourism, but it also lays down practicality-oriented recommendations to boost local community gains and cultural and environmental heritage preservation that, in turn, may contribute to economic resilience in fragile rural regions.

## **Why pay? Understanding visitor compliance with user-fee models in open access contexts**

*Jana Brehmer*

*Dalarna University, Mid Sweden University*

*Sweden*

[jbm@du.se](mailto:jbm@du.se)

*Tobias Heldt*

*Peter Fredman*

Providers of open access tourism services often face challenges in securing funding when legal frameworks support unrestricted access to natural spaces, a challenge which can be amplified by geographic remoteness. Without the possibility to implement mandatory fees or enforcement mechanisms, such service providers depend on visitors' voluntary compliance with funding systems.

This dynamic is particularly relevant for recreational trails (for e.g. hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing), where maintaining infrastructure requires continuous financial support. Hence, understanding why visitors choose to comply is essential for sustaining these tourism services.

While traditional compliance theories suggest that individuals weigh risks vs. consequences, the open access context has legal consequences which are less visible for visitors, or completely absent. In this case, the question arises why visitors would comply to implemented funding models.

Depending on the legal framework and service provided at the destination, compliance models can be equally relevant to describe visitors' behaviour as models about purchase decisions and willingness to pay. It is, however, important to understand visitors' perception on what they are paying for and contributing to.

Therefore, one should investigate if visitors see open access tourism services (e.g. trails) as a common good for which they share responsibility to maintain and contribute financially – or as a commercial service with legitimate reason to charge for.

Such insights could be applied broadly on open access tourism services, from cross-country ski trails and facilities in nature reserves to natural heritage sites and possibly wildlife conservation areas.

Increased knowledge around what motivates visitors' compliance in open access contexts would allow service providers to formulate effective payment calls that show high compliance rates. By aligning funding models with visitors' perceptions providers of open access tourism services can sustain essential tourism infrastructure without restricting access.

The current study adds new knowledge to above-mentioned phenomenon by investigating payment mechanisms of nature-based tourism products - here: groomed cross-country ski trails - under an open access regime. Through 17 semi-structured interviews, the study examines skiers' compliance with trail pass systems for groomed trails and embed these into skiers' overall perceptions of user-fee models in open access contexts. Findings indicate that compliance often stems from a motivation to avoid negative emotions and conflict and during possible spot checks despite undefined legal consequences. Personal interaction with trail providers seems to encourage compliance. Skiers tend to perceive groomed cross-country ski trails as commercial product and service provision rather than a common good. Additionally, they see trail passes as a potential step toward privatising access to nature.

## **Stranded Refugees in Portuguese Tourist Destinations during WWII**

*Marisa de Brito*  
*Breda University of Applied Sciences*  
*Netherlands*  
[brito.m@buas.nl](mailto:brito.m@buas.nl)

*Herminia Sol*

This study delves into how Portugal, as a tourist destination in the WWII, co-evolved with the presence of refugee communities. We investigate the role of refugees in shaping the dynamics of the destination.

During World War II, Portugal became an important refuge for displaced persons, fleeing the war. While the devastation continued in many parts of Europe, Portugal's neutrality allowed it to serve as a safe haven for people escaping the war. Refugees influenced the local economies in areas like Lisbon and Porto, as well as smaller towns and tourist destinations.

Caldas da Rainha, a thermal bath tourist destination in the central of Portugal, was one of the regions where tourism remained a key component of the local economy during and after WWII. The town, known for its therapeutic hot springs, attracted both local and international visitors before the war. During the war, Portugal's tourism sector experienced disruptions, but the presence of refugees helped to sustain services.

The impact of refugees in the tourism sector during this period is often seen through the lens of recovery and adaptation. The social integration of 'refugees' played a role in the post-war recovery by working in local hotels, spas, and service industries. The presence of affluent refugees in the region during the war, provided a buffer for the tourism economy to rebound (Vaughan, 2002; Baker, 2006; Borges, 2010). Many affluent refugees, particularly Jews, sought asylum in Portugal on their way to the United States or South America, who often stayed in high-end hotels (Freitas, 2008). Their wellness routines during the war, included visiting the thermal baths, helping to maintain the town's status as a thermal bath destination (Sousa, 2014). Some of the wealthier refugees in Caldas da Rainha contributed to the establishment of cultural institutions or engaged in cultural and philanthropic activities that would attract more international tourists (Lima et al, 2011). Caldas da Rainha's thermal baths, continued attracting international attention and 'tourists' during the war years and into the post-war period.

Drawing on previously untapped testimonies, as well as archival and bibliographical research, this study will explore Caldas da Rainha's role as a liminal tourist destination. Additionally, it explores how such environment supported refugees in their search for meaning and a sense of humanity through the creation of, and participation in, leisure activities. This study contextualizes the evolution Caldas da Rainha as a spa destination during the vulnerable time of war in Europe. It shows how refugee communities can play a role in the adaptability and resilience of a destination and vice-versa.

Destinations experiencing similar complex dynamics could gain valuable insights from this intense historical period.

## **Systems thinking to understand tourism destination climate action**

*Elisa Burrai*  
*Leeds Beckett University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[e.burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:e.burrai@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

*Kyriaki Glyptou*  
[k.glyptou@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:k.glyptou@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

*Jane Turner*  
[j.turner@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:j.turner@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

*Chris Cooper*

This study draws on systems thinking to explore the effectiveness of tourism destination climate action plans (CAPs) to address the challenges of climate change. The research seeks to examine how and to what extent the five pathways from the 2021 'Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism' inform tourism destination's CAPs, and to identify systemic barriers and enablers of such developments. The research considers the term 'action plans' flexibly enabling us to move away from institutional and top-down understandings of the topic.

Underpinned by Systems Theory, systems thinking is used as an appropriate paradigm to explore the evolutionary and dynamic patterns of climate change and to address the underlying complexity of wicked problems, such as destinations' efforts to address climate change (e.g. through climate plans). Systems thinking offers a conceptual lens for simultaneously integrating all biophysical, social and economic factors of destination climate plans. Further, it identifies fundamental constraints and systemic limits to adaption through the need to consider the wider system transition journey, its integrity and the unavoidable risks of climate change interventions.

This study adopts a mixed-method qualitative approach. Primary data collection took place between March 2022 and June 2023. Seventeen online and one-to-one interviews were conducted with representatives of destination management organisations globally. The sample of destinations comprised a mix of national, regional and local scale. In addition to the individual interviews, seven online group interviews were conducted with 12 participants. Also, in June 2023 we conducted a focus group with 12 participants from eight destinations that contributed to the previous stages of data collection to explore their reaction to the findings.

The empirical research findings highlighted key barriers as (but not limited to) a lack of clear and relevant climate policies and regulation; lack of funds; poor understanding of the scope and sphere of the destination management organisation itself; climate literacy, technical knowledge across the destination; and a lack of data sharing and user-friendly measurement tools. In contrast, enablers included a clear mandate and resources available for the CAP; availability and use of funding; integrated, clear, and effective governance to mainstream climate action; strong partnerships and effective communication to engage all stakeholders; and climate literacy training; advocacy and capacity building across the destination.

The research identified several areas in which climate action plans can be moved forward, including guidance on how to develop CAPs; clarity on climate action communication and terminology; knowledge exchange and transfer; and clarification of stakeholder roles and responsibilities.



## Degrowth, growth and the democratisation of tourism development

*Jim Butcher*  
*Canterbury Christ Church University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[jim.butcher@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:jim.butcher@canterbury.ac.uk)

Growth is not inevitably good. But neither is it, as a category, the problem. The same applies to tourism's growth.

Historically growth (including of tourism) has led to great human advances. It has also generated problems. The general trend is that growth enables these problems to be addressed and solved at higher levels of development. This has historically been regarded as progress. Put simply, all growth destroys something that exists. All growth creates something new. Good growth creates something better than what it replaces.

Overtourism is often presented, quite logically, as the result of too much growth in tourism. But, counter intuitively, I want to advance the argument that some of the roots of overtourism come from a lack of growth in the host economies.

Taking European cities as the example: (i) Deindustrialising and sluggish low growth economies have failed to plan and build for their future, leading to a widespread, in fact global, housing crisis. Growing demand over supply leads to higher prices; (ii) A lack of economic dynamism has led to surpluses being invested in existing capital stock; often in property, rather than in new productive capacity and infrastructure (the latter exacerbating problems relating to leisure mobility). A house becomes a financial asset as much as a home. Communities suffer. Property owners have seen their wealth appreciate. People reliant on stagnant wages have fallen well behind; (iii) in some cases tourism has been developed as a way to address a lack of growth elsewhere

These trends foreground the debates about tourism's role in pricing people out of their communities. They are in important respects due to a lack of growth over a long period ( 'the great stagnation' ) rather than too much growth. Two things, apparently contradictory, can be true at the same time: tourism growth contributes to rising rents and associated economic and cultural grievances (housing is a profoundly cultural as well as economic question); rising rents are due to too little growth, or at least to too little growth of the right sort.

In the past growth was contested, not in terms of growth versus degrowth, but around what constitutes good growth. We live in an extended period of political stasis lacking bold economic and political narratives pointing to a better future. This has reduced politics to a presentist, technocratic question about how to manage things as they are, within limits as presently constituted. This politics of managerial expertise in sluggish economies has alienated many citizens, the result being populist discontent across Europe.

I want to argue that the present moment is an opportunity to argue not in favour of degrowth (which is not at all popular outside of university departments) but in favour of a democratisation of tourism development. Elections and opinion polls generally show resident populations to be favourable to mass tourism and growth but also to retaining valued aspects of their culture and communities. That may be a more realistic and desirable approach than that suggested by degrowth.

## Gen Z's and Their Intention to Participate in Regenerative Activities at Aalborg Carnival

Mark Castañeda  
Aalborg University  
Denmark  
[markaldwin.castaneda02@gmail.com](mailto:markaldwin.castaneda02@gmail.com)

Al Mamun  
Israt Jahan Mumu

Aalborg Carnival has been a significant part of Denmark's culture for many years, attracting over 90,000 attendees in 2024 (Pedersen, 2024). Associating this well-established event with regenerative tourism, a relatively new concept, provides an intriguing avenue for exploration. Clearly, the most interesting feature of regenerative tourism is not its definition but its ambition. Unlike sustainable tourism, which merely aims to minimize harm, regenerative tourism makes a bold promise: to leave destinations better than we found them. The lack of empirical studies supporting comprehensive principles for regenerative tourism (Sharma & Tham, 2023, as cited in Pung et al., 2024) further inspires curiosity about integrating this concept into Aalborg Carnival. Given Gen Z's recognized awareness of global environmental and social pressures (Homer & Kanagasapapathy, 2023), the study aims to investigate whether this characteristic aligns with their intentions to participate in regenerative tourism activities during Aalborg Carnival. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the factors and barriers influencing the participation of selected Gen Z students from Aalborg University. Anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1999), this study will employ a mixed-method approach, gathering qualitative and quantitative data through surveys and questionnaires. The findings will be critically analyzed and cross-referenced with existing literature to uncover nuanced insights into Gen Z's behavior, offering valuable contributions to understanding their role in advancing regenerative tourism practices.

## The Contested Role of Volunteerism in Cultural Events: Building a Sustainable Event Legacy

Luigi Cernigliaro  
Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies  
Italy  
[luigi.cernigliaro@santannapisa.it](mailto:luigi.cernigliaro@santannapisa.it)

**Purpose** – Volunteers are considered critical resources and essential assets in making an event business model work (Milner and McCullough, 2024). Previous studies have examined the relationship between event volunteering and social capital in sports events (Hallmann et al., 2023). However, to our knowledge, a significant research gap exists regarding the role of volunteerism in building a sustainable event legacy within the context of festivals and leisure events (F&LEs).

This study aims to investigate the role of festival volunteerism in fostering social sustainability. In light of the frequently cited role of events as *agents of change* (Getz, 2019), this work specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent can volunteering programmes represent a capacity-building strategy for festival organisations?
2. To what extent can festival volunteering programmes support the development of social capital?

**Methodology** – Focusing on a range of small to medium-sized festivals, the research employs interviews and self-reports from volunteers to explore their experiences, perceptions of the events, motivations, and the long-term benefits of participation. The questions are organised into four thematic parts: 1) Participant background; 2) Motivations for participating (or not) in volunteering; 3) Experiences of volunteering; and 4) Attitudes towards sustainability. Festival organisers are also interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the role of volunteering within their organisations.

**Findings** – Preliminary results highlight the crucial role of volunteers in contributing to various festival tasks and underscore how volunteer work serves as a gateway to community engagement. From the



perspective of festival organisers, retaining volunteers requires professional leadership, with clear tasks and coordination to ensure that their contributions are valued. The findings also reveal that the professional management of volunteers helps them feel useful and respected.

Originality/value – Theoretically, this research updates the existing literature on human resource management (HRM) and volunteerism in the context of F&LEs. By examining the extent to which volunteering can serve as a capacity-building tool for festival organisations and support the development of social capital, this study provides deeper insights into how F&LEs can advance social sustainability. Specifically, the research advocates for the development of dedicated training programmes for F&LE volunteers, not only as mechanisms for skill-building and career enhancement but also as means of establishing a sustainable event legacy that benefits volunteers, organisations, and communities alike. From this standpoint, the study also addresses a significant research gap in equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within F&LE studies.

### **Social media and mountain visitation – is this ‘friendship’ sustainable?**

*Siya Cholakova*  
*Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'*  
*Bulgaria*  
[siya@gea.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:siya@gea.uni-sofia.bg)

*Elka Dogramadjieva*

The role of social media in tourism has already been acknowledged in the academic literature but still little is known about its specific influence on mountain tourism in the context of growing popularity of outdoor activities threatening to harm fragile areas. The aim of this study is to find out the effect of social media on such visits, to outline patterns of tourist behaviour, as well as to reveal social media-induced effects, both negative and positive, regarding the sustainability of mountain tourism. Using an online survey among the members of a Bulgarian mountaineering Facebook group, we found out that it was information of practical use that was mostly searched by its members, and which by turn can be easily converted into real visitation to the area, and as such mainly attracting novice mountaineers. The study uncovered purely pragmatic perceptions in terms of sharing information and pictures about places in the mountains, with limited awareness about the possible negative environmental effects from over-popularisation of these areas. While preventing beautiful places from becoming too popular is not taken as a personal responsibility, the negative role of social media in general seems to be higher perceived. Yet, it is hard to tell whether this is related simply to an anticipated negative tourist experience as a result of overcrowding or reveals an increased environmental concern. Nevertheless, it is possible to turn the defect into effect and use the information powers of social media and their technological opportunities into modern tools to enhance nature protection.

The limitations of this study refer mostly to the non-probability sample which is inevitable when conducting an online survey. The results cannot be automatically transferred for other populations, and if so, probably some cultural and national differences will be observed. The impact of social media on mountain visitation has its own specifics compared to other forms of tourism which are still not examined in depth. To do so, the technological opportunities these platforms provide should be maximised by employing a mixed methods approach comprising online surveys, geolocated big data and visual methods.

## The health implications of touristification

*Agustín Cocola-Gant*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[agustincocolagant@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:agustincocolagant@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Based on a decade of qualitative fieldwork in Lisbon and Barcelona, this paper argues that touristification should be understood not just as an economic, cultural, or spatial issue, but as a significant public health concern. Touristification refers to the transformation of urban spaces to prioritise tourism-related activities, resulting in fundamental shifts in the nature, function, and use of entire neighborhoods. This process involves the reconfiguration of infrastructure and spaces originally intended for residential purposes — such as housing, public spaces, and local retail facilities — into assets that serve the visitor economy. This conversion systematically dismantles the services and amenities required by long-term residents to support their everyday lives, creating profound disruptions for the local population. In the past decade, the intensification of touristification has been closely linked to the global expansion of platforms like Airbnb, which have facilitated the proliferation of short-term rentals. Researchers have extensively documented the ways in which Airbnb-driven restructuring of housing markets has displaced local residents and contributed to skyrocketing housing prices. While these housing market dynamics are crucial, they offer only a partial explanation of the opposition communities express toward the growing presence of tourism in their neighborhoods. At its core, touristification is a process of place transformation. This transformation disrupts the intricate connections between people and their environment — the emotional and social bonds that tie individuals to their homes and neighborhoods. Drawing on the psychology of place literature, this paper contends that the changes wrought by touristification induce emotional disruptions that can undermine the wellbeing of residents, with potential implications for their mental health. These disruptions manifest in various ways, including heightened noise levels, the overcrowding of public spaces, and the loss of local retail services vital to the needs of permanent communities. The Covid-19 pandemic presented a unique context to explore the health implications of touristification. During this period, the absence of tourists created an unprecedented opportunity to observe the mental health impacts of reduced visitor activity. Paradoxically, while the pandemic is widely recognised for its detrimental effects on mental health, residents in touristified areas reported experiencing better mental health during this time. The absence of visitors allowed neighborhoods to revert, albeit temporarily, to more balanced and community-focused spaces.

## Beyond the Binary in Event Management Research

*Willem Coetzee*  
*Western Sydney University*  
*Australia*  
[w.coetzee@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:w.coetzee@westernsydney.edu.au)

This study explores the use of gender classifications in quantitative event management research, emphasising the implications for inclusivity and accuracy in the field. As societal understandings of gender evolve, academic research must reflect these changes to ensure equitable representation and avoid systemic exclusion. Despite growing awareness of gender diversity, a review of recent quantitative event management studies reveals a significant gap in how gender is measured and reported. A systematic analysis of articles published in leading event management journals between 2020 and 2024 found that very few studies included more than two gender categories in their reporting. For instance, while some studies on attendee satisfaction at cultural festivals recorded responses as simply "male" or "female", they failed to account for non-binary or gender-diverse attendees. Similarly, surveys assessing volunteer motivations at sports events often excluded participants who do not identify within the binary, potentially skewing results and limiting the study's applicability. These limited approaches raise pressing concerns about the validity and inclusivity of

research methodologies. By failing to account for diverse gender identities, researchers risk excluding significant portions of the population, reducing the relevance, applicability, and accuracy of their findings. Moreover, this practice may unintentionally perpetuate systemic discrimination, undermining efforts to foster equity and inclusion within event management research and practice.

This paper contributes to the ongoing discourse by advocating for the integration of more inclusive gender classifications in quantitative event management research. It underscores the ethical responsibility of researchers to accurately represent all identities, not only to enhance the reliability and validity of their work but also to prevent the marginalisation of underrepresented groups. The study also provides practical recommendations for improving data collection and analysis methods, such as including open-ended gender options in surveys or employing statistical tools that account for diverse gender identities. For instance, incorporating gender-diverse perspectives into studies on attendee experiences could help event organisers design spaces and services that are truly welcoming to all, such as offering gender-neutral restrooms or inclusive registration options. The findings have far-reaching implications for academics, practitioners, and policymakers, emphasising the importance of gender-inclusive research in designing events that are accessible and welcoming to all. This study calls for a collective commitment to advancing inclusivity in event management research, moving beyond outdated binary frameworks to embrace the full spectrum of gender identities. Through such efforts, the event management discipline can not only produce more accurate and representative research but also actively contribute to creating inclusive practices in the events industry and working toward the SDG on gender equality as well as advancing social sustainability.

## **Exploring the Role of Festivals and Leisure Events in Advancing Social Sustainability**

*Alba Colombo*

*Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*

*Spain*

[acolumbo@uoc.edu](mailto:acolumbo@uoc.edu)

Festivals and leisure events (F&LEs) have become prominent arenas for consumption, experiences, and social interaction in contemporary Europe and beyond. While they are often celebrated for their potential to foster community engagement and strengthen social bonds, F&LEs are also associated with challenges such as the privatisation of public spaces, environmental degradation, waste generation, and their contribution to urban issues like gentrification and neighbourhood disruption. These dual narratives highlight the complexity of their role in modern societies.

Despite these challenges, emerging evidence underscores the potential of F&LEs to promote social sustainability. By fostering social engagement, enhancing communal bonds, and providing platforms for shared emotional and intellectual experiences, F&LEs serve as catalysts for social cohesion and collective action. Their ability to mobilise creative energies and reinforce community resilience during periods of crisis further exemplifies their transformative potential. This dual role positions F&LEs as critical players in advancing social sustainability and driving community development on a global scale.

This article explores the intersection of festivals, leisure events, and social sustainability, aiming to deepen the understanding of their practices and impacts. It examines how these events can act as platforms for fostering inclusivity, community resilience, and social innovation. Additionally, it addresses the pressing need for sustainable practices that guide F&LEs towards contributing positively to societal well-being while mitigating their associated challenges. By doing so, this study provides valuable insights for academics, policymakers, and practitioners interested in leveraging the social value of F&LEs in sustainable development.

## Nature-Based Tourism Risks: Visitor Behaviors and Perceptions in the PNPG

*Elizabeth Couto*  
*Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo*  
*Portugal*  
[elizabethgoncalves@ipvc.pt](mailto:elizabethgoncalves@ipvc.pt)

*Goretti Silva*  
[goretti@estg.ipvc.pt](mailto:goretti@estg.ipvc.pt)

Nature-based tourism has experienced rapid growth worldwide due to societal shifts favouring outdoor recreational activities that involve risk and adventure (Ribeiro, 2020). In Portugal, protected areas such as the Peneda-Gerês National Park (PNPG) have become popular destinations, offering diverse outdoor activities like hiking, water sports, and wildlife observation (De Souza, 2006). However, the increasing influx of visitors has led to a rise in accidents, including severe falls at waterfalls, drownings in reservoirs, and cases of disorientation on trails (Eiras et al., 2020). These incidents highlight the need to assess visitors' risk awareness, preparedness, and responsibility in ensuring their own safety (Nerín & Morandeira, 2005).

This study aims to analyze visitor behaviors, safety practices, and perceptions of responsibility when engaging in outdoor activities in the PNPG. By understanding these factors, the research seeks to provide insights into improving visitor preparedness and reducing preventable accidents in nature-based tourism within protected areas (Ayora, 2019).

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore key perspectives on visitor behavior and risk factors. Additionally, a structured questionnaire was developed and disseminated online to individuals who had visited the PNPG, assessing their perceptions of risk, safety awareness, and preparedness (Rickard, 2012).

The questionnaire included five sections: (1) motivations for visiting the PNPG and knowledge of safety measures, (2) personal experiences with accidents or knowledge of incidents involving others, (3) perceptions of risk factors (environmental, climatic, and informational), (4) sociodemographic data, and (5) behavioral patterns related to safety practices, such as equipment use, activity planning, and awareness of potential hazards.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28. Descriptive statistics were used to outline visitors' safety behaviors, and non-parametric tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Mann-Whitney, and Kruskal-Wallis) were applied to examine differences between groups based on accident involvement. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha=0.874$ ), ensuring the reliability of the constructed indices.

The results indicate that while most visitors claim to engage in safety-conscious behaviors, such as wearing appropriate clothing and carrying essential equipment, significant gaps exist in proactive risk management (Silva, 2017). Specifically, few visitors inform others about their itineraries or expected return times, which can increase vulnerability in case of emergencies. Among the surveyed individuals, 1.8% reported having had an accident in the park, while 17.1% knew someone who had experienced one. Hiking and waterfall visits accounted for the majority of accidents, with falls and disorientation being the most common incidents. The study also found that visitors who had experienced accidents exhibited a higher sense of responsibility in terms of preparation than those who had not (Gstaettner et al., 2017).

The findings underscore the need for enhanced safety communication and structured risk management policies in nature-based tourism areas. Recommendations include improving visitor education on risk assessment, promoting responsible behaviors such as route planning and weather monitoring, and encouraging tracking systems or mobile applications for safety purposes (Auricchio, 2016). Raising awareness about the importance of proper equipment and responsible decision-making can reduce preventable accidents.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism by addressing visitor responsibility, safety behaviors, and risk perception (Spink et al., 2004). By fostering a culture of

preparedness and accountability in nature-based tourism, stakeholders can enhance visitor experiences while promoting safer and more responsible engagement with protected areas.

## **Housekeeping as choreography? Exploring the ebb and flow of rhythms in housekeeping work**

*Tara Duncan*  
*Dalarna University / Thompson Rivers University*  
*Sweden/Canada*  
[taduncan@tru.ca](mailto:taduncan@tru.ca)

*Maria Thulemark*  
*Susanna Heldt Cassel*

This exploratory paper investigates the potentialities of Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis when considering the intersectional analysis of fieldwork with housekeeping staff in five different hotels in Sweden. Following previous research, we see the working and lived experiences of the housekeepers we worked with as a complex overlapping of rhythms that reflect and reproduce intersectional power categories. By exploring through rhythms, and highlighting social categories of differences, we aim to illustrate how our housekeepers flowed with, resisted and moored themselves within their daily lives allowing us insight into how they negotiated power relations, overcame (or not) institutional barriers and transgressed intersectional boundaries.

Utilising the information gathered from the field, we examine how a Lefebvrian lens of rhythmanalysis adds to our understanding of the ways in which our respondents dealt with issues of decency and dignity in the workplace and their corresponding private lives. We question whether taking this approach deepens revelations about the power relations between employer and employee in the hospitality sector. Even as we ensured our own rhythms somewhat aligned – for short periods of time – with those of our housekeepers, we question how the insights gained from trying to grasp these encounters adds knowledge beyond the academy.

At the same time as we continue to interrogate our findings, we see value in taking this approach as feminist critiques of Lefebvre's work draw attention to the intersectional dimensions of rhythms and the intersections between work and everyday life. The boundaries between work, home, leisure, migration become porous as we try to understand the lenses of power through which our housekeepers experience their lives. Through this feminist, intersectional thought process different level of rhythms, different individual understanding of the ebb and flow of our housekeeper's lives become apparent. Instead of questioning our insights, we can imagine rhythmanalysis opening up the discussion to highlight the complexities inherent in contemporary hospitality work.

## **Analysis of green and digital skills needs in the European tourism industry**

*Laia Encinar-Prat*  
*CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy*  
*Spain*  
[laia.encinar@cett.cat](mailto:laia.encinar@cett.cat)

*Patricia Peralta Lasso*

The current tourism model faces three significant challenges: environmental, economic, and social sustainability (UNWTO, 2023). Moreover, the interplay between digitalization and sustainability in the context of tourism industry is essential, as technology can contribute to green tourism activities, apart from enhancing the tourist experience and the company's profitability (Ilyas, 2023). To address these challenges, training human resources is strategic to ensuring aware and prepared professionals (Modi, 2023).



However, there is a shortage of skilled tourism professionals in green and digital skills, as a vast majority has not received any training in these areas. On the one hand, tourism professionals have a low level of proficiency in certain digital skills related to AI, robotics, AR and VR, but also a lack of awareness regarding the importance of these skills. On the other hand, many professionals seem unaware of the need to acquire new green skills, demonstrating a lack of intention to innovate and implement environmental actions within their companies in the future (Carlisle et al., 2020; Carlisle et al., 2022)

This research, framed within the GreenHost COVE Project (funded by EU-Erasmus+), examines the training needs regarding digital and green skills of tourism students, workers and professors in seven European countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. The methodology employs a mixed-methods approach. Firstly, a questionnaire was distributed to assess the current level of 9 digital skills and 10 green skills, as well as the perceived need for these skills in the future. The sample comprised 273 students, 319 professionals and 238 university lecturers. Finally, seven focus group were held, involving a total of 28 university lecturers, 24 business managers and 21 entrepreneurs, to gather insights on the training needs from their perspectives.

The results obtained on digital skills indicate that the current competences of participants are low regarding web development, the use of generative AI, the use of robots and the use of digital technologies to create guest experiences. Concerning green skills, the results revealed that the current level of green skills is low in terms of managing waste and CO2 emissions, efficiently using resources and utilizing technology to speed up the green transition. Nevertheless, participants recognize the importance of being trained in these areas to meet the sector's demands, being the students the group that highly recognise the importance of these skills in the future in comparison to the professionals and professors.

The findings from this research aim to shape future academic trends in vocational training and higher education, focusing on enhancing the green and digital skills of the different stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industries.

## **Determining the optimal tourist tax scenario through a Best-Worst Method**

*Stefania Denise Escobar*  
*Free University of Bozen-Bolzano*  
*Italy*  
[stescobar@unibz.it](mailto:stescobar@unibz.it)

Tourism represents a tool for economic development and is utilized by most tourism destinations to generate income, employment, and foreign earnings. Nonetheless, tourism brings with it a number of side effects, and when these entail costs, they constitute negative externalities. To internalize negative externalities and to collect extra revenue for investments, infrastructure, and social services, over the past three decades, a growing number of governments around the world have imposed tourist taxes. However, there is still a lot of resistance when it comes to implementing a tourism tax especially from tourism stakeholders. This study aims to explore the challenges to a tourism tax implementation to understand which factors should be prioritized in implementing the tax.

To this end, this study will adopt a mixed-method methodology entailing a literature review, semi-structure expert interviews and finally a multi criteria decision making method (MCDM). The first step provides an in-depth exploration and subsequent identification of the challenges to the implementation of a tourism tax through a critical review of previous literature. The second step entails semi-structured expert interviews to validate and possibly integrate the challenges previously identified. Finally, the validated challenges will be analyzed with a sample of 60 experts in the field of tourism taxation to unveil through a MDCM method called the Best-Worst Method the most critical challenge to the implementation of tourism tax and the weight of each individual challenge.

The final ranking of challenges will help advance knowledge in the field of tourism taxation and tourism management and at the same time will be a useful tool for policy makers in their decision on how to implement a tourism tax helping optimize governmental choices.

## **Regional Seasonality of cruise destinations**

*Josep Maria Espinet Rius*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[josepmaria.espinet@udg.edu](mailto:josepmaria.espinet@udg.edu)

*Antonio García-Sánchez*  
*Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena*  
*Spain*  
[a.garciasanchez@upct.es](mailto:a.garciasanchez@upct.es)

*Ariadna Gassiot-Melian*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[ariadna.gassiot@udg.edu](mailto:ariadna.gassiot@udg.edu)

The seasonality of destinations continues to be one of the sector's greatest challenges. Undoubtedly, seasonality makes the sector less attractive, making it difficult to find investors and human resources prepared to carry out tourism activities. One tourism activity that is unique in relation to seasonality is cruises. Certainly, the possibility for shipping companies to move ships depending on demand reduces the overall seasonality of the activity, standing at around 4.9% in terms of ship capacity, which is observed when only analysing the activity within a specific destination such as the Mediterranean - 56.3%- (Espinete-Rius, García-Sánchez & Gassiot-Melian, 2024). This seasonal behaviour of demand also has an impact on the pricing strategies defined by shipping lines.

The aim of this research is to analyse the seasonality of activity and prices in the cruise sector in the main world cruise geographic areas identified by the main world cruise association, CLIA. Certainly, the comparative analysis of the seasonality of the activity in relation to that of prices will allow us to understand the seasonal behaviour patterns of the cruise lines for specific destinations, which may be of particular interest to these destinations in order to understand the strategies followed by the cruise lines that dock in their ports and also to try to attract new cruise lines.

This study is an extension of the research published in 2024 by the authors themselves: Espinete-Rius, J. M., García-Sánchez, A., & Gassiot-Melian, A. (2024). Seasonality in the cruise industry: Activity, prices and regionality. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 38, 3810-3810. In this sense, the same methodology is followed so that the results obtained at the territorial level are comparable with those published at the global level.

## **Using traditional foodways for stimulating regenerative development of mountain communities**

*Carlos Fernandes*  
*Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo*  
*Portugal*  
[cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt](mailto:cfernandes@estg.ipv.pt)

*Goretti Silva*  
[goretti@estg.ipv.pt](mailto:goretti@estg.ipv.pt)

*Alexandra I. Correia*  
*Susana Rachão*

It is crucial to recognize the challenges faced by farmers in remote mountain areas, whose traditional subsistence farming practices on smallholdings limit productivity. To stimulate regenerative development of mountain communities, requires changes at the grassroots level, including agricultural



practices and the adoption of appropriate technologies, respecting the local ecosystem and reducing environmental impact, whilst enhancing productivity. This strategy should facilitate smallholders' access to markets, linking local production to regional consumers, including local restaurants and gastronomy providers, valuing culture and food heritage as drivers of economic and social development. But where to start? This paper aims to present an ongoing research methodology for inventorying foodways in the context of traditional environments in mountain communities. The underlying methodology starts with secondary data concerning foodways practices, agricultural production, and cultural traditions associated with mountain community food systems, such as agricultural rituals and ceremonies. On a second phase, based on a participatory action research approach (as suggested by Huambachano, 2019), primary data is collected through talking circles, oral stories, and dialogues with knowledge holders who range from elders, community leaders, people engaged in traditional food systems and community emigrants. Employing a two-step methodological approach, it is believed to help to identify the meanings communities give to foods that are culturally valued by them, including through nostalgia for past experiences. The conclusions highlight the need to define differentiating lines of research connected to the role of natives in investigating food heritage of remote mountain communities in order to ensure the acceptability and practicability of the outcomes.

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## **The Advertising Image of Craftsmanship in Rural Areas as a Tourism Incentive: The Case of Asturias (Spain)**

*Ana María Fernández García*  
*University of Oviedo*  
*Spain*  
[afgarcia@uniovi.es](mailto:afgarcia@uniovi.es)

*Llara Fuente Corripio*  
[fuentellara@uniovi.es](mailto:fuentellara@uniovi.es)

Advertising campaigns are decisive elements in promoting rural tourism, encouraging awareness of destinations and the possibility of new experiences related to craftsmanship processes. This is an area that has gained momentum in recent years, shifting from a focus on visits, beaches, and leisure to a more experiential type of tourism.

Craftsmanship combines three key elements of attraction: the knowledge of centuries-old traditions, deeply rooted in identity and with a clear historical component, as both tangible and intangible heritage of a destination; the commercial appeal of acquiring something unique, different from the items available in any store in this globalized world; and the opportunity to engage with a technique, experiment with it, and get closer to the processes involved.

This research analyzes the images and marketing strategies of advertising related to rural areas and craftsmanship, both directly and indirectly, in a region in northern Spain particularly rich in manifestations of traditional popular culture. The study examines posters, brochures, and social media as sources of information to define the implicit messages of tourism promotion policies.

## **Beyond Growth: Post-Growth Narratives through New Materialism and Post-Humanism in Tourism Storytelling**

*Natalia Ferrer Roca*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[natalia.ferrer@udg.edu](mailto:natalia.ferrer@udg.edu)

In the context of tourism and leisure, storytelling has emerged as a pivotal tool for reimagining destinations and experiences (Gravili, et al. 2017; Leong, et al. 2024; Mossberg, et al. 2010). However, dominant narratives often prioritize growth-centric models, emphasizing economic competitiveness (Servant-Miklos, 2024). This paper explores how post-growth narratives, informed by new materialism and post-humanism, can offer alternative storytelling paradigms that prioritize sustainability, ecological interconnectedness, and community well-being. New materialism challenges human-centered perspectives by emphasizing relationality between humans, non-humans, and the environment (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010), while post-humanism further deconstructs anthropocentric hierarchies, advocating for a decentered understanding of agency in tourism spaces (Braidotti, 2019). Together, these frameworks call for a reorientation of storytelling practices in tourism that move beyond extractive and commodified narratives towards those that reflect mutual coexistence, care, and non-linear relationality.

This theoretical paper explores how storytelling can contribute to post-growth tourism models by focusing on the relational and intra-active dimensions of matter, memory, and meaning within tourism narratives. Through speculative case studies, it examines the following dimensions: (1) Narrative Design and Representation: How narrative structures can emphasize ecological entanglements and multi-species perspectives, breaking away from human-centric destination storytelling; (2) Identity and Place-Making: How community-driven storytelling can foster place attachment while resisting over-tourism and cultural homogenization; and (3) Sustainable Storytelling Practices: How participatory, slow, and place-based storytelling can support regenerative tourism and emphasize long-term ecological stewardship over short-term economic gains.

The methodology use for this theoretical research involves a combination of critical discourse analysis (CDA), conceptual framework analysis, and speculative methodologies. CDA is used to examine how dominant tourism narratives prioritize economic competitiveness and growth-centric models, while conceptual framework analysis helps synthesize theories from post-growth, new materialism, and post-humanism to explore alternative storytelling paradigms. Speculative methodologies, such as speculative case studies, allow for the imaginative exploration of storytelling practices that emphasize ecological entanglements, community well-being, and multi-species perspectives.

This research contributes to the emerging discourse on sustainable storytelling by showcasing how post-growth narratives informed by new materialism and post-humanism can reimagine tourism not as a site of growth, but as a space for ecological consciousness, cultural preservation, and multi-species flourishing.

## **A Critical Discourse Analysis of academic mobility among Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and PhD's students in Tourism Studies in Sweden**

*Clotilde Formica*  
*Munster Technology University*  
*Ireland*  
[clotildeformica@gmail.com](mailto:clotildeformica@gmail.com)

*Ioanna Farsari*  
*Dalarna University*  
*Sweden*  
[ifa@du.se](mailto:ifa@du.se)

Universities are significant GHG emitters and for instance, in Sweden, six out of the top ten GHG-emitting public institutions are universities with air-travel having a big role. There is a dominant understanding of academic mobility as necessary and inevitable, almost as a right to travel as part of the job signifying a notion of 'mobility ideology' (Flamm & Kaufman 2006). To decarbonise academia and mitigate the negative effects of hypermobility, it is pivotal to individually and collectively shift mentality, disrupting the generalized trend of romanticizing mobility (Sautier, 2021) above all at the early stage of the career. Decarbonising academia is indeed a complex process since mobility, and specifically air travel mobility, is rooted in the practice and the mindset of academia, and it is constructed both in space and in the way scholars think of their identity and profession (Fahey & Kenway, 2010). To decarbonise the academia thus, it is imperative to understand the discourses of academics on their work related mobility and academic air travel is understood as a phenomenon shaped by various power dynamics. Work-related travels for academics are still under-researched while ECRs are overlooked. In this research we use critical discourse analysis to understand the structures and interactions and contextualise them as expressions of power relationships, hierarchies and academic norms.

We conducted unstructured interviews with ECRs and PhD students in the in the field of tourism studies in Sweden. We organise their discourses following the critical discourse analysis by Fairclough (2013) around the 'social wrong' of academic hypermobility which pushes towards a divide on mobile/immobile characterisations and practices. That social wrong is analysed and contextualised to understand the reasons behind it to make better for the world (Sayer, 2003 as cited in Fairclough 2013 p. 10).

Through the analysis, we identify discourses of the 'social wrong' of hypermobility in academic life as a result of power and hierarchical structures in academia dictating expectations from ECRs to perform and contribute to their research environments and its impact on the field. Additionally, styles in the academic world of the 'successful' mobile academic or genres of belonging to the social club of the active/present academic become part of the discourses of ECRs in tourism studies in Sweden.

We also analyse how ECRs discuss the 'obstacles' of knowledge creation, inspiration and creativity in addressing the social wrong by deconstructing them on the ground of increased stress, lack of focus, and climate hypocrisy. The 'opportunities' to address the social wrong through online meetings, other-than-air forms of travel, and the costs on personal life, also become part of ECRs discourses. Finally, the role of higher institutions' policies to mitigate air travel become part of the discourses to 'explore possibilities within the system' to mitigate the social wrong.

Dealing with mobility also means dealing with immobility when the speed of movement of some can determine the slowness of others as analyzed by Cresswell (2010). Moving beyond the dichotomy of mobile versus immobile academics, academic mobility is understood in its complexity, requiring a nuanced understanding how ECRs and PhD students resonate about their (im)mobilities as part of hierarchies, academic norms and feelings of belonging to academic groups. Those discourses create tension and stress among ECRs and PhD students who would like to slow down, balance work and personal life and decarbonise academia.

Discourses of slowing down academic relate to rethinking academic life closer to a regenerative/circular understanding moving away of dichotomised views of successful mobile academic vs immobile outliers.

## **Social inclusion and cohesion through cultural events: A decade of European Capitals of Culture**

*Marisa Fragoso*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[marisafragoso@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:marisafragoso@edu.ulisboa.pt)

*Ana Gonçalves*  
*Eduardo Brito-Henriques*

Social inclusion encompasses the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, while social cohesion reflects the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among community members, characterized by shared values, mutual respect, and a collective sense of place. Cultural events, in particular, are powerful tools for promoting social inclusion and cohesion. Since its establishment in 1985, the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) programme has established itself as a privileged platform for cultural and social development in Europe. Over the decades, the programme has evolved, gaining recognition not only for its cultural impact but also for its potential to address social inequalities. The cultural initiatives associated with the ECoC have driven economic growth and tourism, strengthened social cohesion, and contributed to urban regeneration and the global competitiveness of cities. Cultural events, such as the ECoC, are often seen as tools for promoting social inclusion and cohesion, however, they can sometimes fail to address the deeper, structural issues within communities. While intended to foster participation and solidarity, these initiatives may inadvertently exclude vulnerable groups or offer only superficial solutions, risking the reinforcement of existing disparities.

This study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on content analysis of documents (bid books and final reports) of each of the ECoC from 2014 to 2023 to examine the incorporation of social inclusion and community cohesion into the strategic frameworks and implemented practices of the ECoC. For the selected case studies, the analysis is complemented by academic articles, news, and other documents related to those specific ECoC, providing further contextual information. By examining 20 ECoC cities (two per year), this study conducts a comparative analysis to identify recurring patterns, trends, and divergences in social inclusion strategies across different socio-cultural and policy contexts. The content analysis systematically categorises key themes such as inclusion and accessibility, cultural diversity, community engagement, and empowerment mechanisms. The study applies a longitudinal perspective, assessing how these elements have evolved over the last decade. Selected case studies provide a rich understanding of best practices, challenges, and innovative approaches to fostering social inclusion and cohesion, while cross-referencing multiple sources contributes to a more comprehensive perspective.

Additionally, the study assesses how participatory methodologies and interdisciplinary collaboration can transform cultural events into catalysts for social transformation and community justice. The research also underscores best practices for designing cultural events that prioritise communities' needs through equitable approaches, culturally diverse and accessible programmes, and initiatives that promote community resilience.

Preliminary findings indicate a positive evolution in the integration of social inclusion and cohesion practices, yet also highlight persistent challenges, including the risk of excluding vulnerable groups, conflicts over representation in cultural narratives, and the need for long-term strategies to ensure the equitable distribution of the benefits generated by these events. This study provides valuable insights for academics, policymakers, and practitioners, offering strategic guidance to steer the ECoC and other cultural events towards a future aligned with the principles of inclusion, diversity, and community cohesion.

## Tourism and inequality within destinations

*Fabian Frenzel*  
*Universität Trier*  
*Germany*  
[frenzelf@uni-trier.de](mailto:frenzelf@uni-trier.de)

In the wider context of tourism and inequality, a key area of interest is inequality within destinations. Tourism as an economic practice affects the social-economic configuration of a destination. In the classical destination life cycle model, tourism is a growth industry initially, causing an economic uplift of the destination as a result. However even in these early models, there is the assumption of a flatlining and declining tourism as the destination matures. As the initial boom turns to stagnation, the destination faces the need to re-invent or rejuvenate itself.

Tourism's effects on a destination however are never homogenous. Growth periods in one destination can increase inequality within it, even if the economic uplift is experienced across the board. Growth can also pertain to hotspots in a destination, leaving cold spots in which economic activities may flatline or decline. The causes are multiple: an economic activity prone to leakages, tourism revenue and profit is often channeled back out of the destination, leaving less of the revenue for destination level distribution. Generally, within capitalist modes of production, unequal distribution of profits between capital and labour is also experienced and manifested spatially. Low-income areas emerge in peripheries, as proximity to the accumulation centres is valorized in real estate regimes. Not the least, tourism has its own tendency to spatially cluster in destinations (Russo 2002), creating hot and cold spots of tourism activity. This is not just a problem for the cold spots. In the hot spots, tourism may overshoot carrying capacity, leading to the well-known effects of over-tourism, including overcrowding, functional change to local infrastructures and tourism gentrification.

However, tourism revenue can have equalizing effects when distribution is actively pursued by the public policy. This is arguably easier when tourism revenue grows overall, however considering calls for tourism de-growth, other forms of distribution must also be considered. The question is whether tourism can be planned in such ways that further distribution of its costs and benefits extends across destinations, and I will use this presentation to present evidence and critical evaluation of attempts to do so.

## The Paradigm of the Circular Economy in Tourism – An ethico-philosophical critique

*Matthias Fuchs*  
*Free University of Bozen-Bolzano*  
*Italy*  
[matthias.fuchs@unibz.it](mailto:matthias.fuchs@unibz.it)

*Ralf Lüfter*  
[rluefter@unibz.it](mailto:rluefter@unibz.it)

The concept of the circular economy has only recently been adopted in tourism (Vargas-Sánchez, 2021; Tomassini et al., 2024). It has been argued that tourism's circular socio-relational spaces facilitate regenerative processes for natural assets, places and living creatures by stressing a multiplicity of transformative interactions among tourism stakeholders (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022). Despite its popularity, the potentials of the circular economy as a strong alternative to contemporary linear-extractive models of the economy have remained undertheorized. Hence, we argue that ethical aspects, such as hospitality, caring, fairness and justice, and creativity with a focus on social innovations should be at the heart of the idea of a circular economy in tourism.

The presentation at hand delivers an ethico-philosophical critique of the current application of the circular economic paradigm in tourism. By drawing on transformative tourism frameworks, e.g. localising, socializing, regenerative tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2022; Akhoundoghli & Boluk, 2024), we argue that the ethical potential of the circular economy is typically ignored. First, by focusing



on the local and regional embeddedness of circular economies in tourism, the inherent incomparability of any destination as a unique space for meaning creation is too little debated. Likewise, the in-situ ethical trait of any guest-host encounter as a meaning creation process is insufficiently acknowledged. Instead, current circular economy models are informed by the dominant understanding of (re-usable) resources in terms of factual “means”, implying profit generation and competitiveness as its highest “ends”. However, to approach a truly transformative tourism, the scope of regeneration through circularity needs to be altered from “means” towards “meaning”, considering sense-fullness as the highest ethical goal. In the Aristotelian tradition, the former type of resource-use emphasizes the perverted idea of mere accumulation (Chrematistics), while the latter refers to the creative interplay of humans and natural entities to lead a good life (Eudaimonia) following ethically grounded household rules (Oíkos-nómos). Instead of a reductionist utility underlying mainstream economic thinking, a broadened consideration of meaning creation comprises not only the ethics of care and justice but mainly the de-commodification of the guest-host relationship as well as the overcoming of the narrow resource logic grounded in a mechanistic economic view, in turn based on Cartesian ontology (Fuchs, 2023; Akhoundoghli & Boluk, 2024). By considering these arguments, the concept of circular economy has the potential to unfold the intrinsic ethical character of economic theorizing responsible for the outcomes of economic agency. Hence, a post-mechanistic economic meaning creation considers human creativity as central socio-communicative and ethical factor with its ability to alter the meaning of situational phenomena thereby cancelling ‘outdated’ phenomenological distinctions and creating new ones (Brodbeck, 2013).

To conclude, we provide praxeological evidence to corroborate the above ethico-philosophical discussion by showing a destination case study of St Vigil in Enneberg (South Tyrol, Italy). Through an intensive bottom-up socio-communicative exchange between the various destination stakeholders and its visitors, 16 ethical values have been established, which give clear guidance to develop the destination towards an ethically grounded circular economy.

## **Vitality of Margins: El Cubo Verde and Strategies for Cultural/Creative Tourism Cohesion**

*Llara Fuente Corripio*  
*University of Oviedo*  
*Spain*  
[fuentellara@uniovi.es](mailto:fuentellara@uniovi.es)

*Renata Scalzer Ribeiro*  
[ribeirorenata@uniovi.es](mailto:ribeirorenata@uniovi.es)

Different cultural and creative initiatives born in recent decades in rural territories question and challenge the dynamics that have historically favoured knowledge generated in urban environments. These dynamics have contributed not only to widening the separation between the urban and the rural, but also to establishing hierarchies that position the cultural or cultured over what is considered natural or traditional, reinforcing structural inequalities. However, these initiatives have actively worked to denaturalise this hierarchy, proposing alternatives that not only reverse the traditional city-rural flow, but also encourage the valorisation of the rural environment as a place of creation and transformation. Over time, these strategies can also play an important role in attracting committed visitors, with the potential to contribute to the sustainable development of these areas through cultural and creative tourism, as well as strengthening local economies.

To jointly reflect on these practices, their strengths and weaknesses, the El Cubo Verde network is presented as a case study. Founded in 2015 as part of an articulation within university departments, this network has established itself as a key platform for mapping, connecting and promoting artistic and cultural projects developed outside urban centres. The Green Cube operates on two complementary levels. On the one hand, virtually, it functions as a space for dialogue, a point of mutual support, a tool for interdependence and a channel for the dissemination of initiatives. On the other hand, in the face-to-face sphere, the network has organised a wide variety of activities that include meetings, talks, workshops, seminars, festivals and, above all, collaborative projects between

multiple institutions and cultural agents. Currently, its scope covers the entire Spanish territory, promoting the strengthening of creative communities and contributing to the cultural fabric outside traditional urban environments.

Based on the review of the case study, this communication proposes to stimulate debate around questions such as: What lessons can be learned from this experience to rethink the relationship between the urban and the rural? How can cultural platforms foster sustainable development and strengthen community resilience? What challenges arise when trying to dismantle traditional hierarchies in the cultural sphere?

## **Co-Assessing Segittur's Smart Tourism Destinations Indicator System to Measure Resilience**

*Oriol Gallardo*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[oriol.gallardo@urv.cat](mailto:oriol.gallardo@urv.cat)

*Aaron Gutiérrez*  
[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

*Salvador Anton Clavé*  
[salvador.anton@urv.cat](mailto:salvador.anton@urv.cat)

Smart tourism destinations have become one of the current buzzing topics in tourism studies, experiencing a significant growth of published studies in the last 10 years (Palomo Santiago & Parra López, 2024). However, even though since the call for more research bridging Smart Tourism Destinations and resilience made by Gretzel & Scarpino Johns (2018), some relevant contributions have been made on the topic (Bethune et al., 2022; Glyptou & Choi, 2021) the potential contribution of Smart Tourism Destinations in enhancing destinations resilience remains largely underexplored. In order to transition the research from the conceptual to an empirical sphere, it is necessary to develop tools to quantify resilience in Smart Tourism Destinations. This research aims to contribute to this development by assessing the suitability of SEGITTUR's indicator system to measure resilience in Smart Tourism Destinations. This evaluation is grounded in a purposely built analytical framework on the contribution of Smart Tourism Destinations in achieving resilience. For this research, a Delphi method is applied with experts from various disciplines related to the study and management of tourism destinations. This panel of experts is responsible for determining whether the indicator system used by SEGITTUR's Smart Tourism Destinations is capable of assessing and quantifying their readiness to achieve resilience.

The development of this Delphi method is expected to provide a detailed analysis of SEGITTUR's Smart Tourism Destinations indicator system, potentially confirming its feasibility as an analytical tool to measure resilience in Smart Tourism Destinations. On the other hand, if the expert committee determines that the indicator system is not effective in measuring resilience, this analysis will identify the weaknesses of the system, providing a basis for new research in which new indicators are proposed.



## **Advancing a Model for Sustainable Cultural Tourism: The Ibero-American Cultural Routes Programme**

*Maria Laura Gasparini*  
*Università di Bologna*  
*Italy*  
[marialaura.gasparin3@unibo.it](mailto:marialaura.gasparin3@unibo.it)

The COVID-19 pandemic was anticipated to serve as a turning point, leading to a significant transformation in the tourism development model from the supply side, as well as a shift in demand towards proximity tourism and less crowded destinations. However, the sector is rapidly rebounding to pre-pandemic levels (UNWTO, 2024), and the projected growth in the coming years contradicts the CO2 emission reduction targets set for 2030 (Becken & Scott, 2024; Gössling et al., 2023). In light of this, it is crucial to measure and monitor the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism to ensure that destinations become more sustainable and resilient to changes.

Cultural Routes (CR) are increasingly recognised as effective models for sustainable tourism management. They connect natural and cultural heritage, particularly in rural areas, creating socio-economic opportunities for local communities that actively participate in designing and implementing creative experiences (Richards, 2020). Furthermore, they promote proximity tourism and bridge urban destinations with rural areas, redistributing tourist flows and achieving a better balance between overtourism and undertourism (Bagnaresi et al., 2024).

In addition to local development, the potential of CR lies in the transnational cooperation opportunities among the actors involved. This has already been acknowledged by the European Union, which has supported several initiatives, such as Routes4U (<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes-and-regional-development/home>), as well as completed projects like rurAllure (Gasparini, 2024). The European Cultural Routes programme, launched by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1987, is the most established initiative in this area, fostering culture-led cooperation projects among diverse stakeholders from CoE member states. This programme has also inspired other international organisations, such as the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), which is actively promoting the development of cultural routes in Ibero-America, based on the CoE's model of interregional cooperation.

This contribution discusses OEI's ongoing project, "Advancing the Creation of a Model of Cultural Routes for Ibero-America" (October 2024 – September 2025). The project aims to clarify the definition of an Ibero-American cultural route and develop a set of guidelines and recommendations for the establishment of a future certification scheme. As one of the consultants involved in this project, I will present the methodology used to define a sustainability monitoring system, including criteria and indicators to measure the impacts of CR on the territories they traverse, while considering the economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and sustainable management dimensions.

The preliminary results include a draft set of criteria and indicators along with an implementation methodology intended to support decision-making processes and strengthen governance of the routes at various scales, addressing the current lack of monitoring initiatives for CR. This model is expected to be tested with a sample of route projects and will be further refined during the project's second phase (late 2025).

## **Advancing Sustainability for cultural festivals: Balancing Global Appeal and Community-Centric Approaches**

*Vasiliki Georgoula*  
*University of the Aegean*  
*Greece*  
[v.georgoula@aegean.gr](mailto:v.georgoula@aegean.gr)

The North Aegean islands face distinctive challenges in sustainable development, marked by pronounced seasonality, geographical remoteness, limited transportation connectivity, and geopolitical tensions being an EU border. These factors can restrict sustainable growth, limit year-round tourism, and heighten social disparities. Festivals and leisure events present a unique opportunity to counter these challenges by fostering social cohesion, cultural preservation, and community empowerment while simultaneously attracting national and international visitors stimulating economic benefits. However, designing such festivals requires a delicate balance between international appeal and the preservation of local identity, ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed among stakeholders. This paper explores the potential of festivals as tools for advancing sustainability in the North Aegean by leveraging their ability to strengthen community ties, promote cultural participation and experience, and generate long-term socio-cultural and economic benefits. Furthermore, the study considers the role of festivals in fostering regional resilience in the face of political and diplomatic tensions, particularly by serving as platforms for intercultural exchange and dialogue. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining case studies of existing festivals in the region with stakeholder interviews and secondary data analysis. Stakeholder interviews capture perspectives from event organizers, local authorities, and community members, shedding light on the socio-political and logistical challenges of event planning in the region. Key findings highlight the importance of aligning festival goals with the needs and aspirations of local communities while ensuring that events remain attractive to international audiences. Strategies for achieving this balance include participatory planning processes, innovative marketing that emphasizes the islands' unique identities, and partnerships with regional and international organizations. The paper aims to propose a framework for designing socially sustainable festivals tailored to small scale island destinations. This framework emphasizes the integration of community voices in decision-making, the prioritization of year-round cultural programming, and the creation of synergies between international orientation and local engagement. This study contributes to the broader discourse on social sustainability by demonstrating how festivals and leisure events can serve as catalysts for inclusive growth and resilience in regions facing socio-economic and geopolitical challenges. It offers practical insights for policymakers, event organizers, and researchers seeking to enhance the social impact of festivals in similar contexts globally.

## **Multicultural festivals, belonging and identity: The case of Glasgow Mela**

*David McGillivray*  
*University of the West of Scotland*  
*Scotland*  
[david.mcgillivray@uws.ac.uk](mailto:david.mcgillivray@uws.ac.uk)

*Gayle McPherson*

Festivals and events can make a significant contribution to bringing communities together, strengthening social capital, enhancing social cohesion, facilitating intercultural encounters and producing convivial environments that foster interaction between different cultures (Stevenson, 2020; Mamattah, McGillivray & McPherson, 2023). However, the rhetoric around using festivals and events to catalyse progressive social change is rarely translated into tangible actions (Quinn, et al 2020). In a period where discussions over diversity, multiculturalism and the politics of migration are hotly contested in public life, the role of multicultural festivals has been subject to scrutiny. For some,

multicultural festivals are emancipatory festivals of diversity providing a valuable space for people from different backgrounds and cultures to occupy the same space, temporarily, and to develop greater awareness, understanding and tolerance of each other. Furthermore, multicultural festivals are also lauded for providing a safe space for those often on the margins of mainstream society to celebrate and showcase their treasured cultural traditions and heritage, validated and legitimised by the majority population. However, other commentators criticise multicultural festivals for being 'superficial feel-good spectacles of cultural diversity' (Saeys, 2021) that have become Disneyfied, overemphasise the authenticity of cultural markers like cuisine, music, and clothing preserved by their members and safely consumed by others.

In this paper, we focus on Glasgow Mela, the largest multicultural event in the city. It began in 1990 as a small indoor celebration event as part of Glasgow's year as the European City of Culture, receiving local government funding as part of a drive to demonstrate Glasgow's renaissance as a post-industrial European city and position itself as a cultural destination for tourists and residents alike. It now attracts approximately 45,000 people each year to Kelvingrove Park in the city's West End. Mela is based on the traditions of the Indian subcontinent; the word means 'to meet' in Sanskrit and the event has come to represent a meeting of people from a diverse range of cultures. In 2019, the Scottish Asian Creative Artists' Network (ScrAN) were appointed as the new organisers of Mela, in association with Glasgow Life (an arms-length local government body), as tensions had arisen as the identity of the event was becoming lost and a wider range of cultural identities were present beyond South Asia. The new co-producers sought to bring the event back to its core purpose, making it a platform for activism through arts and culture, deliberately focusing on an exploration of the Scottish Asian and British Asian experience.

The study adopted a co-creative, mixed methods approach. This operated on three levels, exploring the perspective of event organisers, event performers and, finally, event attendees. First, event organisers were interviewed to explore their vision for the event and how that informed design and programming decisions. Second, we conducted interviews with other event stakeholders including performers, volunteers and stallholders to understand their reasons for being involved in the festival and its importance to them. Finally, we utilised an audience survey and a series of creative methods to explore the views of attendees at the 2023 Glasgow Mela event, seeking to understand more about what Mela meant to them and their community. We hosted a creative space and set of activities that encouraged people to share their perspectives on what Mela meant to them expressed via drawing or writing, and offered the opportunity for those who wanted to expand upon this to record vox pop interviews to camera. The design of the arts activities hoped to encourage "playful engagement" (Blaisdell et al., 2019, p. 14), tapping into a way of researchers "knowing differently" (Liamputtong et al., 2008).

We found that, within the Glasgow Mela, there are pronounced differences between the various South Asian communities that contribute to, and attend, the event but the producers understand and programme the event to recognise and address the different religious and cultural traditions present. We show how the Mela programmers work with, and challenge, the privileged status of some folklore and cultural traditions given a platform at the event over the years. By programming artists and including cultural forms that open up dialogue on sensitive issues associated with race, sexuality, disability and casteism, we argue that multicultural festivals provide a space to demonstrate open and changeable nature of ethnic groups, challenging rather than reproducing dominant cultural practices and claims.

## **Will degrowing Airbnb be enough? Rental property owner and alternative rent extraction strategies in Venice historical center**

*Emanuele Giordano*  
*Université de Toulon*  
*France*

[emanuele.giordano@univ-tln.fr](mailto:emanuele.giordano@univ-tln.fr)

In recent years, the rise of short-term rentals (STR), facilitated by the emergence of digital platforms, has revolutionized the tourism industry and led to an unprecedented increase in the accommodation capacity of destinations. Researchers quickly became interested in these dynamics. A vast multidisciplinary literature has emerged showing how the transformation of many homes into tourist rentals puts pressure on the residential function of tourist areas, contributing to the eviction of lower and middle-income classes (Esposito, 2023). To counterbalance these negative trends, many overtouristified cities have introduced limitations on the spread of short-term rentals with the goal of reducing pressure on the rental market (Aguilera et al., 2021). Recent studies have explored both the quantitative (Bei and Celata, 2023) and spatial effects (Bei, 2024) of such regulations. While overall the evidence shows how such regulations, when effectively enforced, have been successful in curbing Airbnb supply, less evidence exists to affirm that these trends automatically translate into growing housing opportunities for long-term residents.

Drawing from the results of two research projects that investigate different profiles of rental property owners in the historic center of Venice, an area where short-term rentals have seen an impressive development (Salerno and Russo, 2022), this communication shows the existence of multiple alternative rent extraction strategies, that while not relying on Airbnb or other traditional platforms, de facto continue to exclude long-term residents from a part of the housing stock. On the one hand, some property owners utilize mid-term rentals that cater to the specific needs and affordability of privileged medium-term stay mobilities in order to keep many of the advantages associated with short term rental, without dealing with short-term regulations. On the other hand, other property owners rather than relying on Airbnb or similar platform adopter alternative strategies like renting through personal and professional networks and non-tourist platforms. While often illegal, these stratagems are very difficult to detect and regulate. Overall, these results hint at the fact that simply regulating short term-rentals, while necessary, will not be enough to improve access to housing for long-term residents and instead emphasize the need for a more comprehensive approach.

## **The Role of Destination Management in Enhancing Competitiveness: Insights from Developing Countries**

*Gianluca Goffi*  
*The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*  
*Hong Kong, SAR*

[gianluca.goffi@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:gianluca.goffi@polyu.edu.hk)

*Marco Cucculelli*  
*Brian King*

This study investigates the relationships between destination management and other relevant components of destination competitiveness. The extensive debate on the key role of destination management has partly overlooked the call for a deeper empirical test, and there is still no clear empirical evidence of its role in enhancing destination competitiveness. This study is aimed at filling this gap. While most existing research on destination management focuses on developed countries, developing countries account for nearly half of all international tourist arrivals and are experiencing higher growth rates in tourism flows (UNWTO, 2020). However, these countries face critical challenges in achieving destination competitiveness (Kubickova, 2017), particularly as they strive to

avoid replicating externally imposed tourism development models. This study is focused on developing countries and is based on the conceptual model developed by Ritchie and Crouch (2003).

A structured questionnaire was administered to 511 tourism stakeholders—including tourism researchers, tour guides, public tourism authorities, and managers of travel agencies and hotels—in two major Brazilian destinations: Rio de Janeiro and Salvador de Bahia. Respondents were asked to assess destination competitiveness across 60 attributes using a 5-point Likert scale. A two-stage regression model was applied. In the first stage, predicted values for destination management were calculated and regressed against a set of explanatory variables using ordinary least squares pooled regressions with clustered standard errors. The second stage involved estimating a probit model, where the dependent variable consisted of three alternative measures based on the predicted destination management variable.

The empirical findings reveal that destination management is significantly influenced by tourism policy and planning, general destination conditions, and demand. In turn, destination management exerts a statistically significant and positive effect on primary attractors and tourism services. Thus, destination management emerges as a key mediating factor, linking primary resources and services with supporting activities, policies, and conditions.

The study offers several managerial implications for tourism in developing countries. First, destination management should not operate in isolation but within a coordinated framework alongside tourism planners and decision-makers, as they share common resources and objectives. Second, a comprehensive understanding of the demand profile is essential for guiding destination management decisions in developing countries. A lack of insight into tourist characteristics can lead to suboptimal strategic decisions that hinder destination competitiveness. Third, destination management should systematically assess the conditioning and supporting components of destination competitiveness to monitor and enhance the quality of the tourist experience effectively. These components provide the foundational elements that enable destinations to compete effectively in the tourism market, shaping destination appeal in developing countries.

## **Liveability and city branding: comparing Monocle's and The economist's liveable cities rankings**

*Sara Góis*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt)

*Eduardo Brito-Henriques*

Cities are facing a range of challenges related to quality of life, environmental sustainability, and safety — factors that are crucial for maintaining their appeal as places to visit, live, and work. As a result, the buzzword “liveable city” has emerged in recent years to describe the response of urban planning and governance to these challenges. City liveability is a multifaceted concept in urban planning and design, encompassing the living conditions and well-being that urban spaces provide to their inhabitants. For urban planners, liveability hinges on ensuring access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and public transportation. It also involves creating urban environments that are inclusive and accessible to all, fostering healthy lifestyles, social interaction, and a strong sense of place and community connection.

The assessment of urban liveability has been approached through various methodologies. Although there is no single index of city liveability that experts agree on and use as a reference, a growing trend to evaluate and compare cities around the world based on the quality of life they offer is visible. This has given rise to the development of different city rankings and indices aimed at measuring and benchmarking urban liveability not only in urban planning journals but also in non-scientific magazines aimed at different targets. As we advocate in this paper, this suggests that city liveability is becoming more and more an attribute of place branding, used as a tool for world cities in their competition to get investment and attract different people with privileged mobile lifestyles, from expats to digital nomads

and tourists.

This paper compares the discourse shaping the rankings of the most liveable cities in Monocle and The Economist magazines. Monocle is an international affairs, culture, design, fashion and travel magazine founded in London in 2007. It has become a benchmark for taste and consumer trends, with a strong presence of soft diplomacy and territorial branding themes in its pages. Founded in 1843, The Economist is a weekly newspaper printed in magazine format covering global news and analysis focused on technology, geopolitics, finance and economics. It is considered to have an influential readership of prominent business leaders and policymakers.

In this communication, we analyse the rankings of both magazines over the past three years. By analysing the indicators used in the rankings, the texts that describe each city, and the images that illustrate them, we aim to uncover the criteria that define city liveability for the subculture of the global elite that these magazines represent and address. The results of our analysis show some differences between the rankings. Monocle highlights the importance of environmental amenities and energy transition as qualifying elements of cities, as well as the availability and quality of housing, urban design, consumption and international connectivity. Therefore, liveability is largely thought of from the perspective of tourists, expats and other temporary privileged dwellers. In The Economist ranking, environmental amenities are less considered. Instead, more focus is given to stability, infrastructures, and healthcare. Liveability seems to be thought from the perspective of new investors and business leaders.

## **Unravelling audiovisual communication of destinations through visual analysis**

*Sara Góis*

*Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning*

*Portugal*

[saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:saragois@edu.ulisboa.pt)

*Eduardo Brito-Henriques*

Visual texts are particularly relevant in tourism, whether through images or videos produced by tourism organizations or shared by friends and relatives in social media. Visual representations create expectations about the destination, influencing the way tourists experience place and space. They suggest that their content is a pure expression of reality, unquestionable and natural. However, since visual texts are the result of the cultural lens of their producers, they should not be perceived as neutral, but rather as texts that have underlying meanings and discourses. Visual texts should be problematised, seeking to understand which hegemonic narratives and meanings underlie them. Over the past decades, video format, or the audiovisual, has emerged as a strategic tool in destination brand management, effectively showcasing attractions and experiences while reaching a broad audience through social media distribution. Analysing the promotional materials of destinations provides important insights into the induced image that is being conveyed, the positioning of destinations, and their values. Several authors have sought to analyse promotional materials of tourist destinations, such as tourist brochures, websites, guidebooks and social networks, where some have analysed visual texts. However, the vast majority of visual research in tourism focuses mainly on analysing photographs, with only a small minority of studies analysing the audiovisual communication of destinations, namely, their promotional videos, TV commercials or short documentaries.

In this communication, we aim to demonstrate how audiovisual communication can be utilized to examine the evolution of city branding in response to the challenges posed by tourism sustainability. To achieve this, we present a visual research framework that utilizes the audiovisual communication of cities, namely, their promotional videos, over the past decade. Sustainability has been a central topic in tourism studies. In response to these challenges, destination branding must also evolve to reflect these values. We argue that visual analysis can make significant contributions to this field, particularly by helping us understand the narratives conveyed by cities in their promotional videos and how these have evolved, and align, with the challenges of sustainable tourism. Specifically, we aim to demonstrate how a triangulation of methods—namely content analysis, semiotic analysis, and



discourse analysis—can help uncover the narratives and meanings embedded in promotional materials.

### **How smart are destinations? (Results of a Hungarian research)**

*Tibor Gonda*  
*Universiti of Pécs*  
*Hungary*  
[gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu)

*Zoltán Raffay*  
[raffayz@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:raffayz@ktk.pte.hu)

In 2023, a 4-year research was launched to assess the situation of smart tourism in Hungary. One of the most important tasks of the first half of the research was to get to know the theoretical foundations of smart tourism, as well as the international and domestic research background, including, among other things, a systematic literature analysis. In addition, the complex ways and possibilities of the theoretical and practical background and application possibilities of smart tourism were explored and interpreted in this period. During the situation analysis, international models and good practices, as well as the results of the EU's smart tourist settlement program, were also taken into account. The system of criteria of the latter had a serious impact on the development of research in Hungary. In connection with the literature analysis of the first year of the research, we found that the topic has a huge literature base, so it is worth continuing the research in the following years. This study deals with the results of research conducted among Hungarian tourist destinations. In 2024, the level of maturity of the tourist destinations in terms of smart tourism was assessed, and it was also analysed how important the use of smart tourism tools and opportunities is in local tourism management. An important part and result of the theoretical work was the preparation of a questionnaire assessing destination maturity in the subject period, in connection with which we had to face the fact that there is no international uniform methodology of this kind, and in our opinion there is a lack of research in this area. During the implementation of the empirical research, the fact that the system of Hungarian destinations has been significantly degraded and is on the verge of extinction was a difficulty for us. Despite this, we were able to include nearly 100 destinations in the research, thanks to the results of which we have a comprehensive picture of the receptiveness of Hungarian tourist areas to smart tourism, and the frequency of use of the possibilities and tools of smart tourism. The situation is not exceptionally good, but it is not hopeless either.

### **Detaching from precarious labour amidst the exhaustion of the tourist city**

*Alejandro González Domingo*  
*University Rovira i virgili*  
*Spain*  
[alejandro.gonzalezd@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:alejandro.gonzalezd@estudiants.urv.cat)

This paper offers an account of the exhaustion of labour as a space of possibilities of upward mobility and hope in the tourist city. I connect with a special kind of collective temporalities of crisis as lived and constituted through social detachments to urban promises within the inherent negativity of the last decade in Barcelona. I present three labour stories attuned to diverse political and affective economies to build an account of the process of detaching from precarious labour and exploitative relations while attempting to connect with the impossibility of the tourist city. I reflect on negativity and related spatial processes of labour immobility, such as hotel maid occupational illness, youth unemployment, and street economy exclusion. These three forms of negativity are out of individuals' control and, for instance, exhausted in possibilities to act otherwise. While attachment is conceptualised as a special



form of relation linked to promises, it implies reflecting on the cruelty, violence, and limits of such relations, such as the losing track of social reciprocity. The labour stories also help deconstruct the normativity of labour agency through queer modalities of thought related to diverse normative paths these subjects could anticipate. Negativity in labour attachments is not just constituted through frying promises of upward mobility as a form of social reciprocity but as spatial alterities of the tourist city, as the limits for hope to circulate and stick into ordinary scenes. The constituency of non-relations in urban geographies is important for expanding a more-than-optimistic vision of tourism jobs and labour agencies, as they are always moving forward potentialities but do not reflect sufficiently on the politics of impossibilities. I conclude by reflecting on these ways of living under thick, negative times of discontent, suffering, and uncertainty. I need further exploration to think through practical ethics of liveability in a city where servitude is about making others feel hospitable. However, scenes of somehow fair inhabitation in the urban are increasingly fragmented. For instance, the stories are not inserted in the grammar of potential openings but in the mundanity and limits of resistance and adjustments as potential orientations to our historical moment of crisis, which can be epitomised within the frying of the tourist city promise.

### **On the making of a self-diagnosing tool for tourism business vulnerability to climate change**

*Alejandro González Domingo*

*University Rovira i Virgili*

*Spain*

[alejandro.gonzalezd@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:alejandro.gonzalezd@estudiants.urv.cat)

*Gonzalo Gamboa*

Improving knowledge about tourism business anticipation of climate change risks and impacts is essential because of their exposure and sensibility to extreme events and the increasing limitations and uncertainties on water and energy resources. The communication introduces a conceptualisation of tourism business vulnerability to climate change, which informs the design of self-diagnostic tools for small and medium tourism enterprises in Spain. The self-diagnosing tool was launched in April 2025. The tool's design was based on a participatory research approach undertaken between 2023 and 2025, including systematic reviews, focus groups, mentoring with SMEs, interviews, and peer reviews with stakeholders. Tourism experience intrinsically relates to climatic conditions (Gómez Martín, 2005; Dogru et al., 2022). Likewise, tourism production and consumption are mediated by a critical relationship between natural resources as a supply source and recreational space around scarce and at-risk resources. Despite the vulnerability of these relations, big tourism corporations still operate under a business-as-usual (Gössling & Scott, 2018), hindering adaptation processes and access to business information (cf. Steiger et al., 2019). Therefore, improving information on how climate change affects the operation and survival of tourism businesses is a step toward reducing knowledge gaps and understanding the limits of adaptation in an environment of accelerated global warming. This is not only because of the scant attention paid by scientists to tourism businesses and climate change (Zemigala, 2022) but also because policies to decarbonise and adapt economies need to be somehow evidence-based. Unlike large transnational corporations and tourists, most small and medium-sized enterprises are relatively spatial fixed in destinations and highly dependent on relationships with scarce and shrinking vital resources (Gössling & Scott, 2024). Therefore, recognising business vulnerability dimensions sheds light on the limits of different adaptation and decarbonisation options, laying the groundwork for a better understanding of the anticipatory management of tourism-dependent businesses and geographies. Several international studies have attempted to quantify the contribution of tourism to global warming (cf. Lenzen et al., 2018), despite the difficulties of statistically defining tourism as a "sector" (see. Jóhannesson, 2015) and the limitations of information to measure energy and water consumption (cf. Casals Miralles et al., 2023). Likewise, most scientific studies on tourism and climate change assess tourism economies' risks and adaptive capacities, especially those linked to ski resorts (cf. Steiger et al., 2019; Scott & Gössling,

2022). Reflections on the culture of anticipation and pre-emption in small and medium-sized enterprises have scarcely been explored in the social sciences. Risk assessment and business impact measurement tools, such as vulnerability self-diagnosis, expect to operate as mediation instruments, as a provocative event (Muniesa, 2014) - of the anticipatory culture of businesses. Their acceptance-usefulness is uncertain, as well as its effective mediation into business action. This communication will introduce the research process and the conceptualisation of the tourism business vulnerability assessment adapted to different activity sectors. It will also reflect on the limits of self-diagnosing tools mediating business action. It will also reflect on the ontology of climate vulnerability that frames the potential problems derived from mainstream climate change and tourism knowledge. This reflection helps to situate the logic of anticipation that informs the design of our self-diagnosing tool and related resources.

## **Narratives between Culture and Nature. Cultural Facilitation/ Education in the Anthropocene**

*Barbara Grabher*  
*University of Brighton*  
*United Kingdom*  
[b.grabher@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:b.grabher@brighton.ac.uk)

This paper explores in what way human-environmental relationships are shaping the storytelling approaches of tour guides in the Austrian Alpine region of Salzkammergut. Inspired by the celebration of the European Capital of Culture in 2024 and its focus on 'climate culture' as a driving concern in the programming of activities, the research investigates in what way tour guides are exploring the connection between culture and nature in their narrative practice.

Ever since the rise of tourism in the 18th/ 19th century, the Salzkammergut region has been represented through its unique alpine landscape. A contemporary example of the region's benefit from its natural environment is the recognition of the Dachstein Glacier and Lake of Hallstatt as UNESCO World Heritage. This award has had immediate influences on the persistent popularity of the region as a tourist destination. However, while the region gains from its natural resources, the alpine landscape is under threat by the ongoing climate crisis and environmental destruction. Consequentially, human-environmental relationships receive increasing attention in the region's storytelling approach. The curated programme of the European Capital of Culture celebrations in 2024 exemplifies this shifting awareness and hereby acknowledges cultural facilitation/education as a central tool for regional narrative developments.

Through ethnographic research, over 15 interviews were collected with tour guides in the Salzkammergut region. Their tours cover a wide range of cultural facilitation/education programmes including city-based historic tours, guided hiking and mountaineering excursions as well as interpretation programmes in tourist attractions including local museums, salt mines, ice caves and. Additionally, the programme of the European Capital of Culture celebration was analysed and selected activities with a strong affiliation with cultural facilitation/ education observed.

As a result of the rich data collection, this paper highlights the relevance of tour guides in constructing, adapting and shaping narratives. Furthermore, the research shows the powerful role of cultural facilitators/ educators in encouraging reflections about human-environmental relationships.

Considering a diverse range of tour guides and their varied narrative practices in the Salzkammergut region, the paper concludes that gaps between culture and nature facilitation/education can be bridged through the themes that are addressed, perspectives that are taken and values that are shared in the context of guided tours.

## Luxury Heritage Brands and Cultural Routes

Manuela Graf  
Friedrich Schiller University Jena  
Germany  
[manuela.graf@uni-jena.de](mailto:manuela.graf@uni-jena.de)

Corporate heritage brands are redefining the relationship between corporate storytelling, destination branding and placemaking by embedding their narratives into tourism spaces. Through the creation of iconic corporate heritage sites, museums and thematic itineraries, these brands strengthen their identities and immersive storyworlds while simultaneously enhancing the cultural and historical significance of the regions they inhabit.

A central expression of this integration has been the rise of corporate museums. Emerging in the late 20th century, as long-standing companies increasingly recognised the value of their heritage as a strategic asset, such museums serve as curated spaces of corporate identity and demonstrate how heritage brands leverage authenticity to attract tourism and elevate their cultural standing within both regional and global contexts. While corporate museums remain important, there is a growing shift towards the creation of thematic corporate heritage routes. These routes represent a more dynamic approach to storytelling, extending the brand's narrative across multiple locations.

While extensive scholarly attention has focused on cultural routes developed by UNESCO or certified by the Council of Europe, corporate heritage routes remain in the shadows. Introduced and defined here as thematic itineraries showcasing a brand's unique heritage and value, they reflect a growing trend, especially among luxury brands, toward the spatial narration of corporate identity. As this model gains traction, the strategic spatial shaping of narratives — particularly by luxury heritage brands — signals an emerging trend poised for significant development in the coming decades.

By analysing these narrative frameworks, the study sheds light on the transformative power of heritage brands to shape not only their own identities but also the identities of destinations and even entire regions. The analysis reveals key drivers behind the development of these routes, such as innovative branding strategies, stakeholder collaboration and regional economic development goals. The findings thus provide a foundation for both scholars and practitioners to further investigate, replicate and adapt these strategies across varied cultural and economic contexts.

Positioned at the intersection of cultural and business studies, this research draws upon theoretical perspectives from narrative worldmaking, strategic storytelling, corporate and place branding. It draws on qualitative data obtained through discourse analysis of both corporate and destination websites, complemented by observations from fieldwork. Methodologically, the study adopts a comparative case study approach, examining five exemplary initiatives: Emilia Romagna Motor Valley, Swiss Watch Valley, Dior, Chanel and Gucci. These cases span diverse industries and geographic contexts, thereby enabling a contextualised understanding of the ways in which corporate heritage routes are conceptualised, operationalised and leveraged to generate value. The identification of recurring patterns across these cases reveals the interdependent relationship between corporate heritage branding and the formation of destination identities.

## **Heritage Tourism and music: The case of Opera Houses through qualitative research**

*Adrian Guachalla*  
*London Metropolitan University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[a.guachalla@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:a.guachalla@londonmet.ac.uk)

The study of heritage tourism spans across different dimensions of lifestyle patterns among tourists and the approaches that can be adopted to better understand them. This study presents the case of a netnographic enquiry into the Opera House tourist's background which results on travel patterns, behaviours and choice of destination. These allow them to actively engage with their interest in Opera and Ballet productions across a variety of cultural landscapes that cater towards this niche tourism market which this project has focused on. To this end, an online exploration of the reasons why individuals develop this type of personal musical heritage was undertaken through qualitative written questionnaires that allowed respondents to reflect on their answers in their own timeframes resulting in rich written narratives. 226 musical tourists engaged with this study that aimed to identify how a tourist develops an interest in these type of art forms, inevitably exploring the arts consumption environments where they typically take place. In this sense, the role of Opera Houses and Grand Theatres were explored in line with this niche tourism market's perception and experience of the destinations they visit. The findings were robust as respondents made strong references to venues such as the Royal Opera House in London and the Vienna State Opera, evidencing the strong impact that they can hold on a tourist's perceived destination image and their experience of them. The study also yielded rich insights into personal heritage development and its connection to engagement with specific art forms in a tourism context. Robust themes emerged from this line of qualitative enquiry. These evidenced that: family references and influences, an individual's age, their level of education, their income levels, further reference groups and their place of origin all play salient and central roles in their cultural consumption patterns. These themes combined have proven to result in personal heritage that leads to consumption of cultural products such as ballet and opera performances. This type of consumer behaviour further cements the cultural tourist's personal heritage as they continue engaging with the art forms. In turn, this yields a deeper and further exploration of them that often results in travelling patterns as tourists wish to continue engaging with this kind of culture at a variety of settings. Hence, the concept of Opera House tourism has been approached holistically and this study sheds light on why people travel to visit Opera Houses and shares insights into some notable destinations that are especially attractive to this end.

## **Unlikely models? Rethinking tourism governance for overtourism prevention via emerging contexts**

*Carlo Guadagno*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[carlog@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:carlog@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Investigating the role diverse actors and agencies play in informing novel governance practices in tourism, this research aims to challenge dominant tourism governance approaches. It does so by shifting the focus from development and growth to overtourism prevention, inquiring how different perspectives and knowledge guide the identification of manifold tourism-related realities. From a critical international standpoint, this study focuses on the Côa Valley Archaeological Park in North-East Portugal, a peripheral region marked by acute depopulation, ageing demographics and vulnerability to desertification. Despite these issues, the area is witnessing a tourism surge due to its abundant socio-cultural and ecological appeals, including rewilding initiatives, Natura 2000 protected areas, and the dual UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS): the Alto Douro Wine Region and the Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde. Relevant transitions tell of this tourism growth and its risks, such as the recent (yet rapid) increase in accommodation options and cruise

tourism. While communities expect tourism to safeguard the socio-ecological systems it relies on and which its industry and governing bodies celebrate, its expanding impacts increasingly threaten them globally. It makes this fragile setting a unique laboratory for exploring current tourism governance opportunities and challenges vital to similar contexts worldwide. This research employs a mixed-method methodology consisting of semi-structured interviews, ethnography, and informal conversations. It engages and examines a spectrum of varied perspectives to understand how diverse agencies can unveil the coherent integration of all socio-ecological, cultural, and economic dimensions into tourism governance praxis. By mobilising both traditional power-holders and less-leading actors, the study explores how knowledge-sharing can uncover opportunities while tackling underemphasised overtourism threats. Preliminary findings defy dominant tourism governance research, underscoring the importance of extensively working to integrate all complex dimensions at stake beyond growth tensions and econometrics. While ethnography captures nuanced local knowledge and concealed dynamics, semi-structured and informal interviews critically interrogate the regional tourism status quo, evolution, and governance. Both help discuss and envision possible and (un-)desirable tourism transitions, driving pivotal scholarly and empirical insights. This research spotlights how crucial to lay the groundwork is to transcend traditional governance models, where mere industry-driven visions and discussion of tourism development dominate. Advocating for experiments amplifying multiple realities and worldviews fosters more equitable and inclusive tourism decision-making processes. Ultimately, this investigation promotes more transparent and balanced tourism governance debates, cultivating frameworks which exceed anthropocentrism and support the preservation of sociocultural and ecological integrity both contextually and globally.

### **Crossing boundaries and boundary crossing: sustainable scenarios for the African South?**

*Karen Harris*  
*University of Pretoria*  
*South Africa*  
[karen.harris@up.ac.za](mailto:karen.harris@up.ac.za)

*Hannes Engelbrecht*  
*Charlene Herselman*

Sustainability has increasingly become the prime catchword of much of the tourism fraternity in the twenty-first century. As such, growing attention has been paid to innovations that can enhance sustainability both at a global and local level. While numerous regions across continents have embraced the concept of cross-border tourism as one such sustainable option, southern African tourism remains essentially fragmented and confined within the respective national boundaries. Given that tourism is often a main source of income for developing countries such as those in the global South, this proposed paper considers both the obstacles and opportunities the crossing of boundaries entails for the tourism industry in this southern African region.

The analysis will consider the seven southernmost nation states in southern Africa as case studies including: South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho and eSwatini. It will expound upon the nature and extent of tourism in these countries, along with the economic impact and importance to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It will also consider the respective legislative and administrative positions and how these differ. While the diverse and disparate nature of this comparison makes it apparent why this region remains divided and insular, it also points to the possibilities of a coordinated cross-border strategy which has the potential of enhancing both viability and sustainability.

The paper propositions two considerations for the development of such potentially sustainable cross-border tourism. The first relates to the product potential of the development of “tourismsapes” as themed tourism routes to encourage and enhance the crossing of boundaries. Examples will include two chronologically extreme tourismsapes: the “Origins route” focussing on fossil and geological sites, as well as the “Liberation route” including places of commemoration of the respective struggle movements across the seven neighbouring countries.



The second consideration will propose mechanisms to enhance the supply service through boundary crossing guides. It will expound upon the training frameworks for the accreditation and operation of a cross-border guiding system within the region. An example of the development and training of such a system will be presented in the context of a “South African-Namibian corridor”. These two key features – tourism landscapes and cross-border guides - will illustrate the viability of crossing boundaries and boundary crossing in terms of the potential of enhancing sustainable tourism in southern Africa.

## **Story tellers – telling stories: Invigorating the southern African touristic story-scape**

*Karen Harris*  
*University of Pretoria*  
*South Africa*  
[\*karen.harris@up.ac.za\*](mailto:karen.harris@up.ac.za)

*CR Botha*

In the post-pandemic period issues of over-tourism and even anti-tourism surfaced and were embellished after the hiatus of the pandemic reprieve. Many of the so-called wicked problems associated with tourism were foregrounded, while the place and positionality of community or indigenous story tellers resurfaced. Though the inclusion of the indigenous story teller has been essentially integral to the touristic offering since the inception of tourism, and in particular tourism on the African continent, touristic-phobic issues of authenticity, exploitation, contrivance and commodification persist. Countering this stance is the income-generating panacea that tourism, and in particular cultural tourism, is said to offer cultural communities across the African continent. It is the light of this contextual conundrum that this proposed paper focuses on the indigenous story teller that features in so much of the African continent’s tourist offerings. Given Africa’s vast pre-literate history which emphasized the pivotal role of orality or storytelling in communal lineages, communities were and still are complicit in these touristic offerings. Moreover, the indigenous story teller adds another dimension to the touristic experience beyond what is observed, to experience what is heard and imagined. It is for this reason that tourist itineraries continue to include the indigenous story teller as integral to a cultural tourism experience. However, one of the key concerns regarding indigenous story tellers is the manner in which they are incorporated into the tourism domain. Not only does their participation often verge on the prescriptive and inauthentic, but they are often co-opted into the cultural tourism itinerary on outsider terms. In this particular case study in southern Africa, these indigenous story tellers are also one of the most over-researched individuals on the planet given that they are regarded as having the oldest DNA of any living population. The first peoples, or Bushman of southern Africa, feature in much of the heritage tourism offerings, but given this invidious position in terms of research, the approach adopted to investigate their situation was not one of research on them, but rather research with them. This methodology was fashioned and coined as participatory research where they were part of the research plan and were involved in the process. This paper will expound on this rather inauthentic form of fieldwork done among a selection of community story tellers who volunteered to participate. An analysis of this participatory research process will be presented, along with what was revealed as both authentic and inauthentic practices in terms of participants and presentation, that further detracts from the notion of genuineness, authenticity and equitability. This paper outlines a proposed model to address these obstacles and offers ways in which the story telling domain can be an opportunity to enhance both the story teller and the telling of stories. Thus through research using participatory workshops and a method of story induction, new and innovative ways of creating touristic story-scapes will be presented.



## Designing transition arenas to accelerate sustainability transition in the visitor economy

*Stefan Hartman*  
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[stefan.hartman@nhlstenden.com](mailto:stefan.hartman@nhlstenden.com)

*Jasper Heslinga*  
[jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com](mailto:jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com)

Our paper aims to demonstrate how transitions can be accelerated through the creation of transition arenas. Using a transition lens to understand and manage tourism is relevant, because the tourism sector is a significant contributor to environmental pollution. With its carbon footprint and other ecological impacts posing serious challenges to sustainability. At the same time, the demand for tourism is steadily increasing as people continue to prioritize travel and leisure. Given this, completely halting tourism is not a feasible option, as it would have broad negative economic and social consequences. Instead, the focus must be on managing a transition toward a more sustainable tourism system.

This transition is already taking place, but it is occurring at a slow pace, indicating the need for more coordinated efforts. For example, in some destinations, the COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for exploring more sustainable tourism practices, although these changes have not been widespread or sustained. A major barrier to this transition is that tourism policies often fail to keep up with societal needs and expectations, meaning that progress is hindered by outdated or slow-moving frameworks. To facilitate a successful transition and the dynamic evolution of tourism destinations, it is crucial to accelerate the development and implementation of policies that support sustainable tourism, ensuring they are adaptable and responsive to both societal demands and environmental constraints. Only through effective transition management can the tourism sector reduce its negative impact while simultaneously meeting the growing demand for travel.

This paper discusses how transitions, despite the uncertainty and complexity embedded in the tourism system, can be accelerated through the creation of transition arenas. These are spaces where key 'frontrunning' actors from various sectors (such as government, business, civil society, and local communities) come together to co-create solutions for sustainable tourism. These solutions can be very to even radically different, going in against dominant systems, but have the possibility, over time, to become (more) mainstream and fundamentally change tourism systems for the good. These arenas allow stakeholders to collaborate, share knowledge, and align their efforts in shaping a sustainable tourism system. They are essential for fostering innovation and facilitating the integration of new practices across the tourism sector. Transition arenas can serve as practical platforms for testing and refining solutions and policies, identifying barriers, and co-designing initiatives that are tailored to local contexts. By bringing together diverse perspectives and fostering dialogue, transition arenas can play a key role in overcoming the fragmentation that often impedes the development of effective, sustainable tourism strategies.

During this presentation we will show the following. First, we will address the need to accelerate urgent sustainability transitions in the growing visitor economy domain (leisure, tourism & hospitality). Second, we will show that focusing on (SME) 'frontrunners' (can) make a difference. Third, we will show practical work in four regional transition arenas using an interactive, design-oriented and experimental manner on climate neutrality, broad prosperity, healthy region and regenerative area-development. Fourth, we show the first results from these transition arenas.

## **Rethinking tourism destination management: Post-COVID-19 strategies inspired by Borobudur, Indonesia**

*Jasper Heslinga*  
*NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences*  
*Netherlands*  
[jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com](mailto:jasper.heslinga@nhlstenden.com)

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense impact on the global leisure, tourism and hospitality sector. Especially in those destinations that are dependent on international travel the impact has been severe, as borders have been closed for a long time and the recovery of international tourism arrivals is still not back on the levels pre COVID-19. Despite crisis impacting the sector, some considered the pandemic to be a wakeup call and as an opportunity to rethink tourism.

Many publications have been produced over the past years about the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality sector and whether this is a game changer or not. Given that the COVID pandemic is quite a recent phenomenon affecting tourism, most of these papers remain conceptual show scenarios, visions and potential outlooks. Not surprisingly the translation into a practical setting remains still under researched. This contribution tries to bridge this gap by showing practical post COVID-19 observations of bold changes that were made at the Borobudur Temple close to Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It is based on observations by, and discussions among, both international and Indonesian tourism experts and relate to the case of the famous UNESCO World heritage site, the Borobudur temple, in Indonesia.

The author will present the following measures that have been taken by the local authorities; setting limits to the amount of visitors, increase the visitor area, provide guided tours only, work with price mechanism, mitigate the physical impacts of visits and involve the local community in the value chain. This case from Indonesia shows that the COVID pandemic has unintentionally created urgency and an opportunity for the local authorities to deal with already ongoing and structural overtourism related issues. This demonstrated that a lockdown was needed to get out of a lock-in.

This paper fits in the ongoing debate on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector. As it provides a practical case, the values of this paper lie in bridging the gap between conceptual contributions to the debate and practical observations. Also, many links with the continuation of the overtourism debate are made. These issues are not limited to the Borobudur case, but are relevant for any tourism destination worldwide that is in the process of redesigning their vision, policies and plans for tourism. Demonstrating these observations are lessons for rethinking the future of tourism management and help inspire the tourism industry and academic community.

## **Ageing in the tourist city: when tourism brings urban living to a standstill**

*Wilbert den Hoed*  
*Universitat Ramon Llull & Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[wilbertdenhoed@me.com](mailto:wilbertdenhoed@me.com)

Many tourist cities rely on walking as form of slow travel to take in the destination. Venice's historical centre, the case study for this article, is a distinct 'walking city', scripted into its cultural landscape along with its visitor crowds. As in other historical cities, however, visitor crowding compromises the walking mobility of residents. This particularly affects groups that rely on proximate mobility such as older adults. This study delves into the effects on everyday mobilities in the tourist city and realities of coping with urban change. It uncovers the repercussions on 'those who remain' and highlights how slow mobility may transform from a privilege into a condition of disadvantage. The analysis of this study engages with long-term mobility biographies, walking experiences, and the ageing process itself during an empirical study consisting of fifteen walking interviews. The findings show how tourist mobilities collide with access to spaces of social activity, essential services, and neighbourhood life. More importantly, they bring to surface how residents negotiate these hindrances and seek

opportunities for mobility and wellbeing, despite the age-related challenges that arise from the exclusive uptake of slow mobilities. Eventually, this article forms a critique that discloses the collateral nature of tourism impacts on ageing in place, stuck between global mobility flows and local tourism management choices.

During this presentation, I further unpack the study's findings related to liveability and quality of life. In an urban context at peak visitor capacity, I specify the liveability indicators and urban amenities that have been put under pressure over time in Venice's historic centre. The framework of Sheikh & van Ameijde (2022) proves particularly useful to focus on both the physical aspects of mobility (transport options) and the softer elements that may make local communities healthy, safe and walkable. I then zoom in on the role of social infrastructures and third places which are arguably vital to maintain the social and physical environments that support ageing in place (Smith, Lehning & Kim, 2018; Yarker, Doran & Buffel, 2024). Thus far, longstanding overtourism has progressively degraded these environments and reduces the accessibility of urban facilities that fulfil basic human needs. Regarding other needs, however, such as belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943), older residents are also found to mobilise themselves against their further erosion through activism and vindication activities that celebrate or remember local traditions and place attachment. Finally, I argue that proximate, slow mobility opportunities may easily turn into stuckness when residents' walking mobility is simultaneously hindered by 'other' walking mobilities, declining essential services, and a city's fixation on heritage preservation that is based on visitor imaginaries that leave structural accessibility hindrances unaddressed.

## **Applying Customer Experience Redesign to Creative Tourism Development**

*Endre Horvath*  
*Budapest Metropolitan University*  
*Hungary*  
[ehorvath@metropolitan.hu](mailto:ehorvath@metropolitan.hu)

Creative tourism is considered the new generation of tourism, characterized by co-creating authentic experiences between locals and tourists. The transformative potential of creative tourism lies in its ability to foster meaningful connections between tourists and host communities, offering immersive, participatory experiences that transcend traditional tourism models. This paper explores the integration of Customer Experience Management (CEM) principles into creative tourism development, emphasizing how destinations can leverage these strategies to adapt to the evolving demands of travelers in the age of transitions.

Drawing on theoretical frameworks and case studies, the research highlights how CEM enhances the design, delivery, and sustainability of creative tourism experiences by focusing on personalization, co-creation, and value generation. It also examines the critical role of local communities in shaping authentic, place-based experiences, ensuring a balance between economic development and cultural preservation.

Set against the broader theme of "Tourist destinations at a crossroads," this study situates creative tourism within the dynamic intersections of space, community, products, politics, and evolutionary processes. By aligning creative tourism initiatives with CEM methodologies, this paper argues for a paradigm shift that positions customer-centricity as a catalyst for innovation and resilience in tourism destinations.

First, the use of a PLANE framework is proposed in order to examine our creative tourism offering in terms of being Proactive, Loveable, Alternative, Near and Easy to Access. The Inbound Marketing Fish Model is placed in a new context to evaluate the acquisition process of Attracting Strangers and Converting them into Visitors, Closing with Customers and Delighting Advocates. Customer Journey Mapping, Persona and Empathy Map are integrated within the procedure to enhance Net Promoter Score and Customer Effort Score values.

Second, a Customer Experience Redesign Methodology is introduced in order to streamline our efforts for strategic alignment. Four elements: Customer Focus Canvas, Client Path, Enchantment Matrix, and Experience Plan pave the way to a systematic approach. Initially, seven key questions are

formulated to define our experience segment, buying process, motivation for repeat visits, response to incentives, satisfaction drivers, opinion leaders, expected value propositions. Secondly, Client path analysis encompasses the phases of pre-purchase, purchase, stay, and repeat visit. The steps range from need, research, and selection – through purchase – to discovery, usage, and maintenance. For each step there is a need to identify moments of truth, irritations and enchantments, and field data and studies. Thirdly, The enchantment matrix will include actions, indicators, responsible, and support organizations. Finally, the experience plan reflects priorities to invest in each initiative. The benchmarks and best practices aim to provide actionable insights for stakeholders —policy makers, practitioners, and researchers — seeking to navigate the complexities of tourism development. The paper concludes by offering strategic recommendations to foster sustainable, community-driven creative tourism in an era of global transitions.

### **‘Marie and Stefan’s Photo Album’: Interactive Storytelling Technology at the Maczek Memorial**

*Moniek Hover*  
*Breda University of Applied Science*  
*Netherlands*  
[hover.m@buas.nl](mailto:hover.m@buas.nl)

*Juriaan van Waalwijk*  
[waalwijk.j@buas.nl](mailto:waalwijk.j@buas.nl)

Storytelling is a tool for emotionally engaging visitors and connecting them to heritage (Mitas et al., 2024). It is increasingly being used to design visitor experiences because of its ability to trigger emotions and meaning-making (Calvi et al., 2024). With storytelling, empathy for a character is crucial for triggering narrative transportation (Gordon, et al. 2018) i.e., feeling drawn into the story. This effect can take place with both non-fictional and fictional characters. When storytelling is used in a heritage context, it is often about characters from the past referring to them in the third person. In other contexts, such as theme parks or interactive theatre, the character - speaking in the first person - sometimes breaks the so-called fourth wall of realism and directly addresses the visitor as “you” (McKee, 2016). Utilizing the second person changes the perspective of the narrative, moving from mere observation to the visitor “playing a role”, and sometimes influencing the storyline. This role-playing aspect increases the level of narrative immersion (Fu, et al., 2023). However, utilizing this interactive storytelling technique in a heritage context automatically introduces a degree of fiction because the encounter with the character from the past never actually took place. This might lead to visitors not “buying” it and, consequently, having a negative experience.

Firstly, this presentation discusses how interactive storytelling techniques were incorporated by the professorship Storytelling (BUas) in the design of an interactive exhibit at the Maczek Memorial Breda, the Netherlands.

The Maczek Memorial features multimedia presentations and (military) objects highlighting the role of the Polish forces in liberating the Netherlands, especially Breda. After the Second World War, unable to return to Soviet-controlled Poland, around 300 soldiers settled in Breda, starting families and new lives. The memorial is primarily run by volunteers, many of whom are descendants of the Polish liberators. The exhibit we designed is an interactive photo album that appears to belong to a fictional Dutch-Polish couple, Marie and Stefan, and, later, their son Mariusz. For the storytelling, we drew inspiration from the historic events and museum objects, but also from the personal stories shared by the volunteers about their fathers and their traumas. In this album, the photos animate into videos (pre-filmed with actors) and each character speaks to the visitor in the second person as if they are a neighbour who steps into their kitchen or meets them outdoors. During the conversation, visitors are asked questions by the characters and vice versa. By touching choices on a page, visitors can trigger the next photo to animate, which brings the next chosen part of the story to life. The characters also speak about their personal lives and how the war affected them, including Mariusz, as a second-generation survivor.

Secondly, the presentation will feature the results from a qualitative study into the effects of the exhibit and its specific storytelling techniques on the experience of visitors. This study will be conducted in the coming months. More details about the methodology will be included in the presentation.

## **Tourism decision-making processes among Chinese Generation Z**

*Lingling Huang*  
*Free University of Bozen*  
*Italy*  
[lhuanq@unibz.it](mailto:lhuanq@unibz.it)

*Maria Lexhagen*

*Serena Volo*  
[serena.volo@unibz.it](mailto:serena.volo@unibz.it)

Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1995 and 2010, gradually enters the market as the youngest and largest consumer group. In China, Gen Z is rising to be the future of consumption, accounting for 20% of the total population. The behaviours of this cohort in China pose a huge challenge for marketers as they differ not only from their predecessors but also from Western consumers. Tourism literature has explored their motivation, emotions, information search and pro-environmental behaviour, but so far little attention has been paid to their decision-making process. Moreover, a new travel style named “special forces” tourism has gone viral among Chinese Gen Z. The spirit of this trend is to travel low cost to visit numerous destinations and to maximize their tourism experiences in a short time with less budget. Based on the rise of this demographic change, this study aims to explore the decision-making process among Chinese Gen Z when planning a trip to Europe. Three research foci are addressed: the information sources used and travel sequences throughout their trip, the meaning attributed to visuals representing sites and destinations and the potential motivations for adopting the “special forces” travel style for a long-haul tourism experience.

This study follows the five main steps of photo elicitation interview: identify a topic for investigation; identify and invite participants to the study; researchers or participants take pictures relevant to a particular question or topic; use images to guide interviews and elicit dialogue; analyze data and report findings. Then, the verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were analysed using inductive thematic analysis, which is a method for identifying and reporting patterns within data. It is not the photos that are subject to analysis. Rather, it is the transcribed conversations with photo elicitation that help to understand the decision-making process. The process and analysis of interviews adhere to ethical standards. For instance, informed consent was obtained from all participants before jumping into the interview questions.

The study enriches the understanding of trip-planning behaviour of an emerging and important cohort in China. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on this demographic group by examining how they utilize information sources, structure their itineraries, assign meaning to the visuals that symbolize destinations and adopt special forces travel style. The findings of this study offer important managerial implications for practitioners in the tourism industry, particularly in the areas of marketing, destination management and travel planning.



## **Tourists' perceptions of glacier tourism: a comparative analysis of Instagram's visuals**

*Lingling Huang*  
*Free University of Bozen*  
*Italy*  
[lihuang@unibz.it](mailto:lihuang@unibz.it)

*Irene Pinto*

*Serena Volo*  
[serena.volo@unibz.it](mailto:serena.volo@unibz.it)

In recent decades, glaciers have become prominent tourist attractions, offering unique landscapes that support diverse leisure activities. However, the accelerating retreat of glaciers due to climate change has dramatically altered these landscapes, paradoxically fuelling increased interest from both tourists and professionals in the field (Welling et al., 2015). This growing attention is reflected in the rising number of studies on glacier tourism (Salim et al., 2021). Additionally, the potential disappearance of alpine glaciers—particularly in Europe—has intensified discussions around the controversial concept of last-chance tourism, which draws visitors eager to witness natural environments before they are irreversibly altered, with both positive and negative implications.

While previous research has primarily focused on adaptation strategies and the environmental impact of glacier retreat, limited attention has been given to tourists' perceptions of glacier tourism. In particular, few studies have examined the role of visual content in shaping tourists' awareness, emotions, and engagement with these fragile landscapes. Given the central role of social media in contemporary travel experiences, this study investigates the visual perception of glacier tourism by different actors on Instagram. Specifically, it compares representations shared by tourists with those produced by professionals.

The study analyses Instagram posts related to the most emblematic glaciers in the Italian Alps. Relevant content is categorized into two user groups: tourists and professionals—such as scientists and influencers. Thematic analysis is conducted on both textual and visual content to uncover dominant narratives related to glaciers' retreat. The study explores whether, and how, the two groups portray and narrate differently the changing landscape and its associated issues. Preliminary findings show that professionals effectively communicate environmental urgency through visuals employing more deliberate storytelling techniques and conveying clearer messages about environmental change, while tourists emphasize aesthetic appreciation, adventure, or nostalgic emotions.

This research contributes to both destination management and climate awareness strategies in the European Alps by revealing how different stakeholders engage with glacier tourism through social media. By understanding the dominant narratives on one of the most widely used platforms, tourism and environmental organizations can develop more effective communication strategies to foster responsible tourism and enhance public awareness of climate change impacts on alpine environments.



## From Growth Management to Degrowth in Tourism: Navigating Contradictions

*Dimitri Ioannides*  
*Mid Sweden University*  
*Sweden*  
[dimitri.ioannides@miun.se](mailto:dimitri.ioannides@miun.se)

*Alessia Mariotti*  
[alessia.mariotti@unibo.it](mailto:alessia.mariotti@unibo.it)

For decades, a major point of discussion and debate among academics, practitioners, and policymakers has revolved around how to balance tourism's seemingly relentless growth in numerous destinations worldwide with the need to protect their environmental and cultural heritage while also ensuring that social justice objectives are not compromised. In many ways, this rhetoric highlights the oxymoron, which prevails in the concept of sustainable development, which on the one hand recognises the need to plan responsibly for continued growth while somehow limiting the negative impacts of this growth. The problem is that despite our growing understanding of tourism's adverse effects, in many localities worldwide, mistakes are regularly repeated. To a major extent this situation arises from our continued failure to address the dominance of economic growth logic within a neoliberal policy environment.

To be sure, suggestions for better managing tourism growth are regularly provided from the international down to the local level, albeit within a context where the emphasis remains on attracting a steady growth of visitors and visitor spending. The UNWTO, for example, continues to insist that through planning and growth management, destinations can mitigate tourism's most adverse effects. The problem is, of course, that the effects of growth management approaches have proved to be limited in most if not all cases, simply because it has proved impossible to identify ways to have economic growth while also limiting resource use.

Realizing the limitations of growth management approaches to deal with tourism's adverse effects, a growing number of observers propose that the only way to challenge the status quo is to adopt a degrowth approach. Unfortunately, despite the existence of a limited number of small-scale attempts that present degrowth characteristics, the reality has been that an approach such as this faces formidable challenges when it comes to its implementation on a broader level.

In this presentation, we explore whether despite these obvious challenges there are certain policies that are more effective than others when it comes to adopting a degrowth approach. We stress that there is no one-size fits all approach given the geographical and other contingencies that characterize various destinations.

Along these lines, although we acknowledge that achieving total degrowth appears to be utopian, we recognize the concept's value as a heuristic that hopefully guides us towards an improved future. Thus, we propose that degrowth oriented policies are necessary to deal more effectively with tourism's impacts. We recognize that these shall differ depending on the nature of a destination (including not only the character and stage of its tourism development but its overall context, e.g., diversified major metropolitan region vis à vis remote rural resort). At the bare minimum, we believe that the strict implementation of growth management approaches is imperative to mitigate some of the most adverse impacts of tourism depending on the nature of a destination. For other destinations, far more drastic measures that seek to eliminate further growth or even reverse the trend may be necessary, again subject to their respective contingencies.

## **Empowering local communities through participatory approaches: cultural tourism and education in Urbina – Carchi, Ecuador**

*Jaime Iturralde*  
*Universidad Politécnica Estatal del Carchi*  
*Ecuador*  
[jaime.iturralde@upec.edu.ec](mailto:jaime.iturralde@upec.edu.ec)

*Wladimir Andrade*  
[esteban.andrade@upec.edu.ec](mailto:esteban.andrade@upec.edu.ec)

*Dennys Bolaños*  
[dennys.bolanios@upec.edu.ec](mailto:dennys.bolanios@upec.edu.ec)

In various tourist destinations, the debate on reducing overtourism has gained prominence. However, in countries such as Ecuador, tourism remains a distant yet highly valued aspiration. Within this context, cultural tourism has been proposed as a potential ally in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Nevertheless, its impact remains controversial, with divergent perspectives regarding its benefits and risks.

In the Ecuadorian case, heritage designation processes are often characterized by top-down, bureaucratic, and opaque dynamics that hinder effective community participation. These processes, usually led by incumbent authorities, tend to reduce local involvement to a mere administrative requirement, overlooking its role as a fundamental pillar in heritage management. As a result, such approaches prove unsustainable, limiting the capacity of communities to integrate their heritage into local development strategies through tourism.

This research adopts a participatory ethnographic approach, employing various methods such as focus groups with cultural actors from seven communities in the Urbina parish; semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders—including dancers, organizers, costume designers, and cultural leaders; and a series of workshops and outreach activities. These included working meetings with community representatives for the development of a safeguarding plan, as well as public presentations of both its preliminary and final drafts, with participation from cultural actors and local authorities.

The workshops addressed topics such as the historical evolution of the festivity, its organization, community participation, symbolic meanings, and mechanisms of knowledge transmission. The methodology incorporated tools like oral history, cultural mapping, and visual documentation (photographs, audio, and video), all of which supported the construction of a community-based safeguarding strategy.

Focusing on the Carnavales de Urbina, a traditional festivity in Tulcán, Ecuador, this study examines a participatory model for safeguarding intangible heritage through educational initiatives and sustainable cultural tourism. Based on insights from community workshops, the research explores how local actors perceive, value, and engage with their heritage, identifying opportunities for its sustainable management.

Findings suggest that participatory approaches enhance cultural resilience by fostering community ownership and intergenerational knowledge transmission. Moreover, the integration of education and tourism emerges as a viable alternative to top-down governmental policies, helping to keep the celebration alive and meaningful amid contemporary challenges.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing debate on community-led heritage preservation, emphasizing the transformative potential of cultural tourism, sustainability, and education in empowering local actors.

## Cultural and creative tourism business models: a comparative analysis of sustainability issues

Laura James  
Aalborg University  
Denmark  
[leja@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:leja@ikl.aau.dk)

Henrik Halkier  
[halkier@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:halkier@ikl.aau.dk)

Previous work on cultural tourism business models has highlighted the distinction between traditional models, focused on tangible heritage such as museums and archaeological sites, with creative tourism models that emphasise active visitor engagement with intangible practices like crafts or performing arts (Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov, 2010). More recently, Richards (2021) has charted the development of creative business models from the development of individual learning experiences to digital peer-to-peer platforms and placemaking. This paper builds on this earlier work to develop typology of Cultural and Creative Tourism (CCT) business models, providing a framework to evaluate their sustainability across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The typology identifies four distinct cultural and creative tourism business model groups — Looking & Listening, Making & Doing, Touring, and Buying & Consuming — based on their value propositions and forms of visitor engagement. Each model group involves different ways of leveraging cultural resources, ranging from relatively passive observation of performances or heritage sites to active participation in creative practices, movement between linked destinations, or the consumption of place-based products. Using examples of cultural and creative tourism from Denmark, and drawing on the literature on sustainable business model innovation (Bocken et al., 2014; Baldassarre et al., 2017; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2018), the paper compares these business models, highlighting the sustainability challenges and opportunities associated with each. Looking & Listening models, often centered on tangible heritage, emphasize resource preservation and accessibility but face challenges in balancing conservation with visitor engagement. Making & Doing models potentially foster deeper connections between tourists and the local community through participatory experiences, but also raise concerns about inclusivity and the commodification of heritage. Touring models by definition involve mobility, which often increases environmental impacts but may also redistribute economic benefits across multiple locations. Buying & Consuming models integrate cultural resources into touristic services like gastronomy or craft production. While this creates a source of income, it may have negative impacts in relation to supply chain sustainability and equitable benefit-sharing. The paper argues that analysing business models in this way is an important step in the development of tailored approaches to sustainable business model innovation that address the specific dynamics of cultural and creative tourism.

## Exploring the Role of Fascinating Natural Landscapes in Recreation and Tourism Design

Kelsey Johansen  
University of Eastern Finland  
Finland  
[kelsey.johansen@uef.fi](mailto:kelsey.johansen@uef.fi)

For decades, researchers have developed systems to classify natural landscapes for recreation and tourism, yet the role of landscape characteristics in shaping leisure experiences remains understudied. The restorative and therapeutic benefits of natural landscapes are predominantly explored within the field of environmental psychology. (e.g., Berto, 2005; Brooks et al., 2017; Hartig et al., 2003, 2014; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1995; Ulrich, 1983). Research often uses color-coded terminology to classify landscapes: greenspaces for vegetation-dominated areas and bluespaces for water-dominated areas (Deng et al., 2020; La Puma, 2022; Li et al., 2023; Taylor & Hochuli, 2017). While natural landscapes are typically categorized by the dominance of plants, water, or rocks and minerals,

many include multiple components without a single dominant feature (Li et al., 2023). Despite this, studies largely focus on urban and periurban greenspaces due to their accessibility, leaving bluespaces and multi-component landscapes underexplored (Li et al., 2023). Existing research has primarily focused on the stress-reducing effects of natural versus built versus virtual environments (Gatersleben & Andrews, 2013; Ohly et al., 2016), leaving the relationship between therapeutic landscapes and recreation or tourism design, along with their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes, underexplored. Expanding this research is crucial for a deeper understanding of therapeutic landscapes and their applications. With the rise of outdoor recreation and nature-based well-being tourism during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also vital for experience facilitators to understand how landscape characteristics trigger emotions, restoration, and transformation. Fascination refers to the effortless attention elicited by inherently engaging stimuli, a key concept in Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). This theory suggests that certain environments restore cognitive resources by captivating attention without requiring mental effort. Natural settings often evoke fascination through elements like flowing water, rustling leaves, or scenic vistas (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Berto, 2005), linking it to specific landscape features and positioning it as a pathway to restoration via nature exposure. Awe, inspired by experiences with wildlife, aesthetics, vast landscapes, and ecological phenomena, further strengthens human-nature connections during nature-based tourism when paired with reflection and perspective-taking (Pearce et al., 2017). However, little is known about the aspects or features that foster awe-inspiring experiences (Pearce et al., 2017) or the antecedents and consequence of awe in tourism experiences (Wang et al., 2020). As part of a wider project, this pilot study employed Attention Restoration Theory to explore the emotions elicited by fascinating and awe-inspiring landscapes, and the mediating role of individual characteristics and familiarity, using a 2D nature exposure experiment. Preliminary findings revealed the confounding effect of familiarity on awe and fascination among local versus tourist populations while highlighting the need for future research into the role of sound and scent in evoking fascination, awe, and restoration. These insights, and the knowledge generated by the ongoing project, have significant implications for designing recreation and tourism experiences that promote participants' desired well-being outcomes.

## **Changes in short-term rentals in CEE: The case of Airbnb in Lodz**

*Karolina Kacprzak*  
*University of Lodz*  
*Poland*  
[karolina.kacprzak@geo.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:karolina.kacprzak@geo.uni.lodz.pl)

Since the emergence of the Airbnb platform, it has been the subject of numerous studies and discussions. Although this phenomenon has been studied in a broad context by various disciplines, there remains a lack of research addressing changes in its structure over time and within urban space. Furthermore, once society adapted to the new pandemic reality, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) had to confront the proximity of an armed conflict in Ukraine, which created a different set of conditions for the development of Airbnb. The aim of this presentation is to discuss the results of research on the evolution of Airbnb in Lodz — a post-industrial city with strong tourist aspirations. The dynamics and directions of changes in the spatial distribution of Airbnb listings will be presented, as well as changes in the structure of the listings and the profile of hosts, from the platform's introduction. This presentation contributes to the ongoing discourse on the spatial foundations of the development of digital short-term rental platforms in cities across Central and Eastern Europe.

## **Cultural activity and creative strategies in tourism-driven economies: exploring the potential of Samos**

*Nicholas Karachalis*  
*University of the Aegean*  
*Greece*  
[nkarachalis@aegean.gr](mailto:nkarachalis@aegean.gr)

*Anna Kyriakaki*

*Vasiliki Georgoula*  
[v.georgoula@aegean.gr](mailto:v.georgoula@aegean.gr)

The interconnection between cultural infrastructure, cultural activity, and cultural work with vibrant and attractive places has been widely discussed, particularly in relation to tourism development. Supporting cultural development is vital for fostering healthy, inclusive, and sustainable communities. Culture contributes to the formation of identity and local pride while affirming values, embracing diversity, and reflecting the aspirations of the communities it serves. Equal access to culture remains a central objective of cultural strategies, with the coordination of diverse actors—including public, private, and voluntary stakeholders—being a significant challenge (Cheer et al., 2022). Recent critiques of the "cultural industry" concept have highlighted concerns regarding the economic instrumentalization of culture, the precarious conditions faced by cultural workers, and unequal opportunities for local populations in cultural production and consumption (Bell & Oakley, 2016; Mould, 2018; O'Connor, 2024). While tourism is often viewed as a mechanism for commodifying contemporary culture, it also holds potential for fostering sustainability in the cultural sector. This paper critically examines cultural strategies within this context, drawing on extensive field research and a participatory cultural planning meeting/workshop conducted on the island of Samos, a prominent Aegean Island whose economy is heavily reliant on tourism during the summer season. The study explores whether cultural industries/activities can serve as a developmental pathway and identifies the support mechanisms required for such integration. The fieldwork consisted of two parts: (a) interviews with stakeholders, including representatives and artists active in contemporary culture and key participants in the island's cultural events, and (b) a face-to-face participatory workshop involving 20 representatives from public and private institutions, associations, and cultural professionals of Samos. This research critically evaluates the synergies and networking opportunities among artists, local institutions, creative and cultural industries, and tourism actors, with a particular focus on the role of place branding in shaping cultural strategies.

## **Tourist city mobilities: examining visitor-resident interactions and perceived impacts in Barcelona**

*Anna Kazakova*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[anna.kazakova@urv.cat](mailto:anna.kazakova@urv.cat)

*Xavier Delclòs Alió*  
[xavier.delclos@urv.cat](mailto:xavier.delclos@urv.cat)

*Aaron Gutiérrez*  
[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

The intensification of tourism has become a critical challenge for contemporary cities, impacting the environment and daily rhythms of local communities. Tourism brings economic benefits, yet it creates



pressure on urban systems and infrastructure, affecting the quality of life of residents. Traditional tourism impact studies have mainly focused on aggregate effects or assessed the balance of benefits and costs of tourism, while the particular aspects of urban life, such as daily mobility, in which visitors and residents share spaces and resources, remain understudied. Moreover, locals' attitudes and acceptance of tourism may vary depending on the nature and purpose of their activities when encountering tourists. Understanding the characteristics of these interactions is crucial for developing sustainable urban tourism management strategies that maintain the satisfaction of visitors along with the well-being of the residents.

To address this research gap, the present study examines visitor-resident interactions in Barcelona through the mobility patterns and habits of local people. We analyze how residents perceive visitors' presence and influence on their mobility patterns across four trip purposes: commuting to work or study, caregiving for children or elderly, shopping, and leisure-related trips. Using survey data from 2,000 Barcelona residents collected in 2022, we investigate different aspects of these interactions by examining spatial, temporal, and modal patterns, along with assessing impacts on trip duration, route adjustments, perceived safety, and overall comfort.

This analysis presents initial findings focusing on commuting trips, evaluating how both trip characteristics and sociodemographic factors shape tourist-resident encounters during work-related travel. Residents who take morning trips consistently report lower negative impacts from tourists in all dimensions, with the weakest influence observed in trip duration and route adjustments compared to midday travelers. Car and motorcycle users experience increased trip duration when encountering visitors, compared to the reference group, and the group commuting by walking does not perceive changes in travel time and comfort level. Among sociodemographic variables, age emerges as an important factor, with younger residents being less likely to report high impacts on their route and comfort.

The results illustrate a need for targeted mobility management strategies that account for temporal and spatial distribution of visitor activity, while considering the everyday needs of residents. This research underscores the importance of developing flexible and adaptable urban mobility solutions that can effectively balance the needs of both residents and tourists while maintaining the city's accessibility and livability for all users.

## **Reviving Colonial Heritage, Marginalizing Indigenous Memory: UNESCO's Designation of Moravian Settlements in Bethlehem, PA, USA**

*Akbar Keshodkar*  
*Moravian University*  
*United States*  
[keshodkara@moravian.edu](mailto:keshodkara@moravian.edu)

In July 2024, UNESCO designated the religious settlements of the Moravian community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in the United States, as its newest addition to its list of 952 cultural World Heritage sites. However, the land on which the Moravian colonialists built these settlements, which UNESCO now celebrates as constituting universal value to humanity, was acquired by defrauding the indigenous Lenape Indians living in the area under the manipulative Walking Purchase agreement in the 1730s. Thus, while new attention is drawn to celebrating and preserving the heritage of the Moravians, a Christian group from Europe, in the land stolen from the indigenous residents, the Lenape, forced off their lands, remain excluded (once again) from the UNESCO designation. Displaced and driven off from their land for over the past three centuries, their heritage whitewashed, and now having their land celebrated for the heritage of their European colonizers, the designation of this location by UNESCO as a World Heritage site renews criticism of this project as a neocolonial endeavor, grounded in Europeanized notions of heritage and aesthetics and rooted in western historical, cultural and ideological paradigms at the cost of marginalizing cultures and histories of non-European peoples.

Based on ethnographic research in Bethlehem, PA, and the surrounding area, this paper examines how different local constituencies are involved and excluded from developing this destination as a



World Heritage site for new forms of consumption associated with heritage tourism and conceptualizes their notions of community within the framework of this new designation. Moreover, the paper analyzes how this development, aimed to cater to European populations and tourists aligned with the Moravians in the United States and Europe, further diminishes the agency of the local Lenape community in defining and articulating their heritage and voices as they continue to claim symbolic custodianship over these lands and strive to preserve their indigenous knowledge systems, now under the hegemony imposed by the new UNESCO designation. Lastly, given the extent to which the UNESCO's World Heritage initiative claims that it fosters global heritage conservation, the paper endeavors to contribute to dialogues challenging the neocolonial framework of UNESCO World Heritage by advocating for local and global educational programs and policies grounded in the equitable representation of non-Europeanized populations excluded from such designations, in turn advocating for a more diverse and inclusiveness of historically marginalized communities and foster participatory governance integrating voices of indigenous communities to counteract narrative erasure and promote broader representations of heritage to reflect outstanding value to humanity.

## **Evaluating International Tourists' Perceptions of Phuket Beaches Through Online Reviews**

*Krittabhas Khwanyuen*  
*Prince of Songkla University*  
*Thailand*  
[krittabhas.k@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:krittabhas.k@phuket.psu.ac.th)

*Nichapat Sangkaew*  
[nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th)

Phuket, Thailand, stands as a premier beach tourism destination, significantly contributing to the nation's economy and employment. This study investigates tourists' perceptions of ten key beaches in Phuket by analyzing 23,267 English reviews posted on online platform. Utilizing sentiment analysis, the research identifies factors that drive tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction, offering actionable insights for tourism stakeholders to enhance the visitor experience.

The methodology involves preprocessing the review data through punctuation removal, case normalization, stop-word elimination, and stemming using the Porter algorithm. A Naïve Bayes classifier was employed to conduct sentiment analysis, categorizing reviews into positive (4-star and 5-star) and negative (1-star, 2-star, and 3-star) sentiments. Valence analysis was further applied to assess the impact of frequently mentioned terms on overall tourist experiences.

Key findings reveal an average satisfaction rating of 3.95 out of 5 across the ten beaches. Naiharn Beach achieved the highest rating (4.46), while Patong Beach received the lowest (3.61). Positive sentiments were predominantly associated with terms such as "clean," "water," "sand," and "beauty," highlighting the appeal of Phuket's pristine natural environments. Conversely, negative sentiments were linked to issues like water quality, overcrowding, and inadequate facilities, particularly at Patong and Kamala beaches.

The study investigates deeper into influential factors shaping tourist perceptions:

**Water Quality:** Tourists praised beaches like Freedom and Naiharn for their clear and clean waters, whereas beaches like Bangtao and Patong faced criticism for poor water conditions.

**Cleanliness:** Most beaches were commended for their cleanliness, except Kamala Beach, which received negative feedback regarding maintenance.

**Foodservice Facilities:** The availability and variety of restaurants and bars were positively received at most beaches, although Surin Beach experienced dissatisfaction due to the absence of sufficient food services.

**Swimming Suitability:** While Naiharn Beach was lauded for its safe and enjoyable swimming conditions, other beaches were criticized for unsuitable landscapes and overcrowded environments that hindered swimming activities.

**Crowding:** Patong and Kata beaches were frequently mentioned for being overly crowded, detracting from the overall visitor experience.

Cultural and Local Aspects: Positive mentions of local boat services and cultural integration were noted, enhancing the unique appeal of certain beaches.

The research underscores the importance of environmental quality, effective crowd management, and the provision of adequate amenities in shaping positive tourist experiences. Recommendations for local authorities and tourism stakeholders include implementing water quality monitoring programs, enhancing beach cleanliness through regular maintenance, regulating tourist numbers to prevent overcrowding, and expanding food and beverage options to meet visitor demands. Additionally, integrating local culture and ensuring sustainable practices are essential for maintaining Phuket's reputation as a leading beach destination.

By addressing these key areas, Phuket can further strengthen its tourism sector, ensuring sustainable growth and enhanced visitor satisfaction. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, business owners, and tourism managers aiming to optimize the beach tourism experience in Phuket.

## **Transforming Tourism? Potential and Struggles of European Cities**

*Ko Koens*

*Inholland University of Applied Sciences*

*Netherlands*

[ko.koens@inholland.nl](mailto:ko.koens@inholland.nl)

*Clare Inkson*

*Cristina Maxim*

*Shirley Nieuwland*

*Ilaria Pappalepore*

*Eva de Smedt*

*Bert Smit*

*Luc van den Boogaart*

This research investigates how European cities engage with the ongoing debate on the transformation of tourism. While transformative concepts such as regenerative tourism, circular tourism, and degrowth tourism are increasingly discussed in both academic and practical contexts, there is limited research on how these ideas are implemented in practice.

Using interviews with tourism stakeholders in seven European cities, conducted by members of the SIG Urban Tourism, this study explores the approaches these cities adopt, their motivations, and their progress in implementing transformative practices, including the difficulties they encounter. Particular attention is paid to the discursive construction of success, as is for instance shown in the development of quantitative indicators and KPI's, and qualitative parameters that capture the broader socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism.

The research highlights the influence of local contexts (e.g. the economic significance of tourism and perceptions of (over)tourism) on the operationalisation of these transformative frameworks. As such, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding and new insights of how European cities address the challenge of translating transformative ideas into actionable practices.

## Visiting Friends and Relatives Travel Induced by Padua's Student Community

*Elmira Laleh*  
*University of Padua*  
*Italy*  
[elmira.laleh@unipd.it](mailto:elmira.laleh@unipd.it)

*Nicola Orio*

While the attractiveness of a destination and the importance of its historical, cultural, and social resources as drivers of tourism have been widely studied, and research has examined how non-resident populations, such as immigrants, influence tourist flows, there is still limited understanding of the role of non-local students in this process. This is especially true in Europe, where little attention has been paid to how these students generate mobility among their acquaintances and shape their travel behavior. This research addresses this gap by exploring the "Visiting Friends and Relatives" mobility generated by students in Padua, in northeastern Italy, known as the "city of art and science", home to UNESCO-listed 14th-century frescoes and the University of Padua, one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious universities, with over 70,000 students and a large international and Erasmus student community. Between December 2023 and February 2024, a survey on visits received in the past 12 months was conducted among non-local students at the University of Padua, including off-site Italian, Erasmus, and international students, resulting in 639 usable responses. These students were selected because they are neither permanent residents nor tourists, and their fluid identity allows them to act as both visitors and promoters of tourism.

According to the findings, non-local students play a significant role as destination promoters, actively encouraging acquaintances to visit them in Padua. In fact, 77% receive at least one visit per year, with an average of more than one visit every two months. Although these visits are sometimes combined with holidays, events, or business reasons, the students remain the main motivation. They participate in planning activities for their visitors, acting as informal travel consultants. At the same time, they engage in various activities with their visitors, resulting in additional expenses, estimated at a minimum of €6 million for the 2023–2024 academic year, with total annual expenditure, including both student and visitor spending, estimated at nearly €23 million.

Moreover, students' visitors tend to stay longer than average tourists in Padua: 2.6 nights for friends, 3.2 for relatives, and 3.9 for partners, when excluding daily visitors, compared to 2.1 nights for average tourists. This represents a valuable opportunity for destination marketing strategies to increase economic benefits. Visitor behavior also varies depending on their relationship with the student (friend, relative, or partner), affecting their choices of accommodation, activities, duration of stay, and spending patterns. These groups should therefore be targeted differently in marketing strategies.

Beyond the case study, these findings offer insights for policymakers on the importance of university students as tourism generators, often overlooked in destination management plans. In cities like Padua, which, in addition to having a large student population, also offer rich historical and cultural resources, these two aspects can be effectively integrated. Even in cities not traditionally known as tourist destinations but with large universities, the student population can serve as a key asset to attract visitors and help compensate for the destination's lower tourism appeal.

## Tourism's roles in overcoming the story of separation toward more livable futures

Stefan Lazic  
University of Trento  
Italy  
[stefan.lazic@unitn.it](mailto:stefan.lazic@unitn.it)

Loretta Bellato  
Swinburne University  
Australia  
[lbellato@swin.edu.au](mailto:lbellato@swin.edu.au)

The story of humans being separated from the rest of nature has dominated most people's thinking, conditioned by the Western mindset over the past few hundred years. This has led to unquestioned assumptions rooted in mechanistic worldviews that privilege individualism, financial growth through resource extraction, and colonization. Such mindsets have shaped how we design human systems and relate with non-human beings. The story of separation has enabled tourism development to be subverted by neoliberal agendas driving ecological and social harms. However, this prevailing narrative is increasingly being challenged, prompting the exploration of new approaches to tourism development.

While tourism can, and sometimes does, use storytelling to promote alternative solutions, it is locked into the dominant neoliberal economic system focused on exponential profit-making. Significant progress is needed to shift the dominant extractive paradigm and position tourism as a catalyst for transformational change, as stakeholders have yet to embrace a regenerative mindset centered on altering human relationships with the rest of nature, from extraction towards kinship. This presentation discusses how storytelling in tourism can support humans reconnecting with nature as a prerequisite for undertaking the paradigm shift toward regeneration. Insights from two regenerative tourism PhD projects will be shared drawing from qualitative case study findings in diverse contexts. Although these contexts vary geographically and culturally, they share similarities in approaching human-nature synergy, drawing from local heritage, ancestral traditions, and identity, all rooted in a profound connection between human agency, land, well-being, and more-than-human ethos.

Findings indicate that storytelling can contribute to changing the narrative from separation to one of connection and healing, changing the roles of tourism stakeholders from extractive toward regenerative. Storytelling supports the collective work of creating a shared understanding of a place's key patterns, dynamics, and potential, transforming local social contexts to create new realities. It has the power to shape new behaviors and knowledge capable of shifting mindsets towards fundamental changes in how humans relate among themselves and with nature, ultimately influencing tourism development. When adopting regenerative tourism approaches, an ongoing role is to increase the capacity of all tourism stakeholders to unlearn extractive approaches and align them/ourselves with the regenerative potential of nature and their intrinsic interconnectedness.

Tourism and tourism storytelling practices were found to play an essential role in fostering reconnection and reciprocity with nature, and also in education, awareness raising, and revitalizing cultures. Storytelling, transformative experience design, interpretive signage, and festivals honor sacred heritage places and share knowledge about places beyond the structures themselves. Tourism initiatives have powerful roles as new pattern generators toward regenerative futures. Hence, when applying a regenerative tourism approach, tourism creates value for the development of healthy social-ecological systems that can be life-affirming and thriving.

## Promoting Sustainable Sporting Events for Sustainable Destinations: A Demand-Side Perspective

Miha Lesjak  
University of Primorska  
Slovenia  
[miha.lesjak@fts.upr.si](mailto:miha.lesjak@fts.upr.si)

Emil Juvan  
Eva Podovšovnik

Tourism's dependency on natural resources is a double-edged sword. While these resources form the backbone of tourism activities, their degradation and depletion threaten both local environment sustainability and the long-term viability of the tourism industry. The promotion of environmentally sustainable tourist behavior (ESB) is identified as a critical mechanism to mitigate tourism's environmental footprint. A fundamental determinant of ESB is the interaction between tourists' willingness to act sustainably and the availability of structural opportunities to support such behaviors. Consequently, tourism stakeholders must identify behaviors tourists are predisposed to adopt and ensure the availability of enabling conditions. The critical role of events in the development of tourism destinations is accompanied by significant sustainability challenges. Events necessitate the construction of specialized infrastructure, such as oversized stadiums and temporary sport event infrastructure, which often results in land use changes. This process reduces natural habitats and contributes to biodiversity loss, raising concerns about the long-term environmental impact of sport events.

This study examines sport tourists' willingness to participate in three distinct pro-environmental interventions aimed at reducing waste footprints during a major international ski event. The aim of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of two visitor-focused strategies aimed at mitigating waste-related issues during major ski event. The primary theoretical contribution lies in the empirical validation of Stern's Theory of Environmentally Significant Behavior (2000, 2005) within the context of such events. The first intervention involves direct participation in site cleanup, the second explains the willingness to separate the waste at the exit area, while the third offers a mechanism for spectators to financially offset their environmental impact through contributions to an environmental fund. Results indicate that 69% of spectators are inclined to participate actively in cleanup efforts, whereas only 28% are willing to donate to the fund. Utilizing regression analysis, the study identifies socio-demographic and psychological variables that segment spectators into distinct groups based on their behavioral tendencies. The findings highlight that gender, age of respondents, their education, the year they attended the event, spectators' opinions about their contribution and contribution of other spectators to solve the waste issue at the sport event, their perception that the organizer is responsible for solving the waste issue, and their perception that they care enough about waste issue at home so they can relax and not think about it at the sport event. This research contributes to the theoretical discourse on environmentally sustainable tourism behavior by explaining the complex interplay between individual predispositions and structural opportunities. Practical implications for destination governance and tourism policy include the need for targeted communication strategies and infrastructure investments that align with diverse tourist profiles. The study concludes by outlining pathways for integrating behavioral insights into sustainable tourism frameworks to enhance environmental outcomes while preserving the quality of sport event spectator experiences.

## **Mapping the Research Ecosystem on Gender-Sensitive Urban Mobility Planning: a fragmented network**

*Alba López Ortiz*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[alba.lopezortiz@urv.cat](mailto:alba.lopezortiz@urv.cat)

*Benito Zaragozaí*  
[benito.zaragozi@urv.cat](mailto:benito.zaragozi@urv.cat)

*Wilbert den Hoed*  
[wilbert.denhoed@urv.cat](mailto:wilbert.denhoed@urv.cat)

Urban planning from a gender perspective enhances urban environments by fostering inclusivity and accessibility. Despite its benefits, research on gender-sensitive urbanism remains fragmented, with varied approaches and limited integration across disciplines. A significant aspect within this field is mobility, as it intersects with issues of safety, accessibility, tourism and equity. However, it remains unclear to what extent research networks address this integration.

Understanding the existing landscape of research and collaboration in this area is crucial to advancing inclusive urban planning strategies and identifying gaps where further study is needed.

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology based on the PRISMA framework. A scoping review and meta-analysis of publications indexed in the Scopus data base are conducted. The collected data is then used to create a connection graph and a cartographic representation of the identified research networks. In addition, we analyse the frequency and intensity of collaborations among researchers, identifying key contributors and thematic clusters within the field. This methodological approach allows us to provide a comprehensive and data-driven overview of how gender-sensitive urban mobility research is structured globally.

Preliminary findings indicate that gender-sensitive urban mobility research is concentrated in a few countries, with limited cross-border collaborations. Additionally, some researchers work in isolation rather than as part of cohesive groups, leading to a fragmented knowledge base and hampering the creation of a knowledge network.

The study discusses potential strategies to strengthen research collaborations and broaden the scope of gender-sensitive urban mobility studies. By mapping this research network, we aim to enhance visibility, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and inform future urban planning policies that better integrate gender perspectives into mobility planning. In this way, this vision would be integrated into urban planning and design, improving the liveability of cities and ensuring equitable access to all facilities for all residents, addressing issues such as social segregation or spatial justice.

## **How to continue to survive on the World Heritage List in urban destinations? A transatlantic look of the challenges of belonging to UNESCO.**

*Silvia María López Ruiz*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[silviamaria.lopez@udg.edu](mailto:silviamaria.lopez@udg.edu)

The designation of a UNESCO World Heritage City may have different interests for its governing bodies. Many of these destinations are currently looking for solutions to adapt to various global challenges, such as climate change, housing issues, and appropriate management of tourism activities. In the same way, the challenge of heritage conservation in accordance with UNESCO status is also being sought. Is it possible to develop and adapt destinations versus conservation? Are there common problems between cities and regions of two different continents? Does cooperation between cities of different regions help to reduce problems? The governance experiences and problems of



twenty-two World Heritage cities in Europe and Latin America, belonging to eleven countries, are analyzed through a qualitative methodology.

The results suggest that the success of urban management depends on the level of governance structure in the cities. It is possible to cooperate in different cities through external cooperation bodies outside UNESCO. Global problems are shared, but in Europe the tourist activity detonates and exacerbates these problems, and in Latin America social backwardness and governmental problems create a crisis of financial resources that make management impossible.

## **Role of sensory experience in memorialisation: visitors' perspective from Auschwitz-Birkenau**

*Jozef Lopuch*  
*Masaryk University*  
*Czech Republic*  
[lopuch@ped.muni.cz](mailto:lopuch@ped.muni.cz)

Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial and museum can be considered as an epitome of dark tourism, which is the act of travel to the sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre. In recent years, over 1,5 million went through the infamous "Arbeit macht frei" gate, making it one of the most visited dark tourism sites. The original definition by Lennon and Foley considers the collective memory particularly important in determining what is and what is not dark tourism, thus marking the beginning of dark tourism to the start of 20. century. Whether we agree with them or not (as many scholars), it is unquestionable that memory is significant in the dark tourism research, as the discussion about the „darkness” of the place regards the chronological distance from the tragedy. If the tragic event happened in a shorter timeframe from nowadays, it could possess a higher degree of darkness. It is over 80 years since the first transport to Auschwitz, so it is even more important to look at the process of memorialization of this tragic site.

The aim of this paper is to connect dark tourism with the concept of memoryscape, which is an assemblage of memory objects, practices, imaginaries that constitute space times. Most of the works regarding the memoryscape of Auschwitz is focused on how the place and its symbolic space changes in the way of representation, but this paper aims to contribute with showing the visitors' perspective, adapting non-representational theory and focusing on their embodied and affective experiences. Research consists of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the specific case of Auschwitz-Birkenau visitors, one group of secondary grammar school of Slovak students on a school trip while having no direct connection to that place (they are neither Polish nor Jewish). Their perception and memory making process is particularly important in the context of rising popularity of alt-right politicians in the country that denied Holocaust in the past.

The objective of the research is twofold. Firstly, it shows which particular sites in Auschwitz-Birkenau were the most memorable through the embodied experience of the visitors and how they affected them, e.g. personal belongings or photos of prisoners in Auschwitz. Later it shows how it transcribes into students' memories – besides physical travel, they also made an imaginary journey to the time when camp was functioning. Their experiences, such as affects or feelings, often in combination with material encounters transcribe to their memories of the site in numerous ways. One of them is compassion for the victims when sensory experience enhances imaginative engagement, e.g. feeling uneasy makes them think about how uneasy it had to be for the prisoners in much worse conditions. It can also have educational potential as such an affective response makes it easier for the visitors to remember what they have seen, heard, etc., e.g. story about the doctor injecting acid into the prisoners.

## Magical realities: Reconceptualising everyday magic in tourism spaces

Jane Lovell  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
United Kingdom  
[jennylovell44@live.co.uk](mailto:jennylovell44@live.co.uk)

Nitasha Sharma

Researching magical tourism involves delving into a complex, ambiguous realm beyond conventional rational understanding. Post-Enlightenment society has long harboured a deep-seated fear of the unknown which has led to the persecution of practitioners and so magical travels, and the locations associated with them, have historically been overlooked and even hidden. Yet it can be argued that a global shift towards the irrationality of magic is observable in tourism today, reflecting more pluriversal, post-human contemporary concerns. For example, increasing numbers are travelling to attend gatherings to practice alternative spiritualities, and the development of non-patriarchal witch camps in the US celebrate a proud history of magic. A broad spectrum of activities and narratives attract visitors to temporary and permanent magical sites, ranging from highly commercial theme parks and fantasy festivals, to small-scale communings with spirits of place in urban orchards (Wigley, 2021). Furthermore, Lovell (2019) argues that historic Medieval environments are merging into 'magi-heritage' for those tourists who are familiar with fantasy setting tropes such as the castles and towers that are popularised by mainstream multiplatform media productions. This work indicates that a steady seep of the marvellous into the ordinary makes magical tourism a significant trend which requires investigation. Yet despite this, discussions of magical tourism still frequently centre on rationalist, Weberian binary notions including ordinary/extraordinary, enchanted/disenchanted, distance/proximity, and Other/self (Holloway, 2010; Picard, 2022; Urry, 2002).

In order to more holistically understand the spaces of magical tourism, this research investigates how the artistic and literary tradition of magical realism offers insights into the blurring of rationalist divisions. As Zamora and Faris (1995) argue, magical realism 'is not centralising but eccentric, it creates space for interactions of diversity' (p.3). One of the reasons why magical reality is less divisive is that it focuses on 'mysterious causality' (Morton, 2013) where the mechanisms of the magic are not evident, but accepted. Magical realism has been applied to tourism by Tzanelli (2020) in the context of an experimental discussion of methodology in an analysis of a Greek underwater exhibition, and by Lovell and Griffin (2019) to describe the combination of fabulist light illusions and material buildings in light festival projection-mapping. But what is missing from these studies is a focus on magical tourism spatiality.

In order to address this oversight, this exploratory study is therefore structured around five key aspects of magical realism adapted from Faris (2004, p1). They are: firstly, to consider the irreducible (inexplicable) magic of some tourist destinations; secondly, to examine why some places seem to manifest a strong presence of the phenomenal world; thirdly, to assess how different realms are negotiated in magical tourism spaces; fourthly, to examine how unsettling doubts are approached by tourists visiting magical geographies; and fifthly, to investigate how magical tourism disturbs received ideas about time, space and identity. Critically examining these five dimensions of magical realism also allows this interdisciplinary research to forward critical and cultural tourism studies by indicating that magical tourism spaces are increasingly moving away from rationalist, reductive binaries towards a state of a marvellous ordinary. Rather than dwelling on human-induced, planned, or themed magical tourism, we elaborate on the mysterious causality, subversiveness, deeper interconnections and overlaps between places, humans and non-humans in tourism.

## **Cross-border collaboration in cultural tourism: the role of proximities and border-crossing practices**

*Anna Luna Lind*  
*Aalborg University*  
*Denmark*  
[allind@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:allind@ikl.aau.dk)

*Laura James*  
[leja@ikl.aau.dk](mailto:leja@ikl.aau.dk)

*Anette Therkelsen*

Cross-border cooperation is important in relation to tourism development in rural border regions because it can counterbalance the peripheralization that they often experience in relation to their nation state and metropolitan areas (Nienaber & Wille, 2020). It can also help avoid damaging competition between neighbouring destinations and the duplication of efforts in relation to marketing and infrastructure (Stoffelen et al, 2017). Cross-border tourism projects have led to job creation, better management of tourism flows and environmental impacts (Prokkola, 2008), and an increase in social, economic, and political cross-border relations. Of Interreg projects funded between 2014-2022, at least 39 can be identified that included actions related to tourism and/or culture and rural areas. However, achieving successful cross-border tourism collaboration is not without challenges. Tourism-related cross-border cooperation can be complicated due to differences in legal and institutional structures (Marton et al, 2017), and the degree of cultural, linguistic, and political similarity also varies greatly between border regions, creating potential obstacles to successful collaboration. This paper examines these dynamics through the lens of the TOUR-BO Interreg project between Denmark and Germany, with a specific focus on cultural tourism. Drawing on concepts of physical, cognitive, relational, and institutional distance from Regional Studies and Economic Geography (Torre, 2008; Lundquist & Tripp, 2013) and synthetic, syntactic, and pragmatic boundaries from Organizational Studies (Carlile, 2002; 2004), the paper explores the challenges of collaboration and how boundary-crossing practices can support the development of cultural tourism.

## **Co-creating Resistance: Participatory Filmmaking and Local Narratives Against Mass Tourism in the Cinque Terre and Venice**

*Nick Mai*  
*University of Leicester*  
*United Kingdom*  
[nick.mai@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:nick.mai@leicester.ac.uk)

This presentation examines two participatory filmmaking projects, Sciacchetraill and Vie di Fuga (Escape Routes), co-created with local organisations in the Cinque Terre (Liguria, Italy) and Venice, respectively. Situated within the context of escalating mass tourism, these projects explore how community-led initiatives focusing on sport-related activities utilise filmmaking to challenge dominant narratives, reclaim local heritage, and foster a deeper connection to place. The presentation will include the display of filmed excerpts from both films. Sciacchetraill documents a trail running race through the iconic terraced vineyards of the Cinque Terre, highlighting the tension between the region's unique cultural landscape and the pressures of over-tourism. Participant-generated videos juxtapose the beauty of the working landscape with the realities of crowded spaces and disrupted community life. Vie di Fuga focuses on Venice, where a women-led association reappropriates the city's waterways through boat navigation, offering "escape routes" from tourist saturation and fostering a renewed sense of belonging and agency. The film interweaves personal narratives and footage of community-led actions challenging the commodification of Venice.

In response to the Special Track's focus on the specific and critical contributions of visual methods to understanding the contested and political dimensions of tourism—particularly through community engagement and empowerment—this presentation will highlight a sensuous, participatory, and co-creative approach. This approach focuses on the intangible losses produced by mass tourism, including experiences of solastalgia, alongside showcasing local creative responses and acts of resistance. By analysing the visual strategies and collaborative processes of these films, this presentation argues that participatory filmmaking can serve as a powerful tool for critical tourism studies, enabling marginalised local communities to articulate their experiences, resist the homogenising effects of mass tourism, and advocate for more sustainable and community-centred approaches to tourism development. The projects demonstrate how local knowledge and creative expression can contribute to reclaiming narratives and fostering local responses to tourism-induced socio-ecological challenges, ultimately fighting for new ways of understanding and inhabiting these deeply affected territories.

### **Who let dogs in? Conflicting narratives in dog-friendly tourism and leisure initiatives**

*Maria Månsson*

*Lund university*

*Sweden*

[maria.mansson@iko.lu.se](mailto:maria.mansson@iko.lu.se)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people acquired dogs that are now integral to their daily lives, leading to shifts in consumption patterns. Globally every third household owns a dog. This has resulted in a high demand for pet-related products, such as dog food, courses, and activities for dog owners, as well as tourism and leisure opportunities tailored for dogs and their owners. In response to this interest, more businesses have adopted a dog-friendly approach. However, are these dog-friendly initiatives by tourism and leisure businesses appreciated by all, or do they carry potential risks and conflicts?

The theoretical underpinning for this study is that the human perception of dogs has changed, and they are now seen as family members, creating what some human-animals studies researchers call multi-species, or interspecies families (Owens & Grauerholz, 2019). You don't leave family behind when going on holiday, so people bring their dogs on holiday because it elevates the owners' enjoyment of their holiday experiences (Carr & Cohen, 2009). This changed relationship between humans and dogs' influences consumption patterns and the expectations that people have of public spaces and different services provided (Dotson & Hyatt, 2008). However, to understand the dog-human relationship, it is also necessary to include a perspective on how tourism and leisure experiences take place in public spaces that involve actors, such as service providers and other tourists that could lead to potential conflicts (Bowes et al., 2018; Carr & Cohen, 2009).

The aim of this ongoing study is, therefore, to identify narratives related to the understanding of dog-friendly tourism initiatives from a consumer perspective.

The research is based on a media analysis related to three shopping centres in the south of Sweden that allowed dogs inside their premises. This change garnered attention in local newspapers and on social media. The news led to a frenzy, and it generated 5 newspaper articles and 1200 comments on the news that forms the empirical materials analysed in this study. A narrative analysis based on Czarniawska (2004) different steps was conducted.

The identified narratives were associated with enthusiasm, as people could bring their dogs inside instead of, for example, leaving them in the car. However, there were also prevalent narratives concerning fear and the threat that dogs might bite or harm their children, as well as the high risks for individuals with allergies to enter the premises. Moreover, there was a significant antagonism toward dog owners. If dogs were permitted, then other animals should also be welcome; otherwise, it would not be fair. The narratives highlighted a strong polarisation between dog owners and non-dog owners. This illustrates that the simple act of businesses launching new initiatives to be more inclusive and dog-friendly can generate negative backlash. To prevent such conflicts of interest in the future, a clear

communication strategy is necessary to bridge the gap between different interest groups. The study brings new knowledge about potential conflicts with multi-species tourism in public spaces.

### **Destination image semiotics: Impact of cultural differences and stereotypes in domestic tourism**

*Estela Marine-Roig*  
*University of Lleida*  
*Spain*  
[estela.marine@udl.cat](mailto:estela.marine@udl.cat)

*Serena Volo*  
*Free University of Bozen-Bolzano*  
*Italy*  
[serena.volo@unibz.it](mailto:serena.volo@unibz.it)

*Serena Lonardi*  
[serena.lonardi@unibz.it](mailto:serena.lonardi@unibz.it)

The study of destination image has been ongoing since the mid-20th century. Gartner's image-forming agents can be summarised into three categories: induced (dependent on the destination's marketing organisations), organic (from visitors) and autonomous (independent of the previous two). Data collection from organic sources has evolved from costly surveys and interviews to user-generated content (UGC) freely shared on social media. In this sense, word-of-mouth (WoM) dissemination has been replaced by electronic WoM (eWoM).

UGC, composed mainly of texts and pictures, conveys signs that represent denotative and connotative meanings of the image perceived by visitors. This image is subjective because it is formed in the minds of visitors and, at the same time, it is part of the projected image because prospective tourists consult social media. Recently, Marine-Roig coined the term 'destination image semiotics' to highlight the close correlation between Peirce's triad and the overall image. That is, at the vertices of the triangle are the images projected by the agents (sign/representamen), the tourism resource (object) and the image perceived by tourists (interpretant). Morris' trichotomies extended the Peircean triad, allowing for an evaluation of the image perceived by visitors in contrast to their expectations. In addition, it makes it possible to analyse tourists' behaviour.

The above model was applied to the South Tyrol region in Italy because it is home to two communities with different cultural, linguistic and identity roots. TripAdvisor was the largest source of UGC data before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, TripAdvisor reviews written in Italian and German from 2011 to January 2020 were collected, and textual and paratextual elements were extracted and organised. A total of 4,508 domestic tourists' reviews were collected, of which 898 were written in German and 3,610 in Italian. After an initial preprocessing of data, online travel reviews (OTRs) were translated into English. Next, tourist attractions and activities were grouped into categories, i.e. key terms with similar meanings or connotations, according to resources promoted by TripAdvisor. Finally, sentiment analysis was used to measure the polarity and intensity of feelings in the text and to infer visitor satisfaction. Data were also analysed to verify stereotypes.

The semiotic value of OTRs in representing the destination shows the German speakers' greater attachment to their past. Results confirm the relative nature of perceived destination images, which is subjective and comparative. Finally, German-speaker reviews' affective and evaluative dimensions partially contradict the stereotypes.



## **Representing Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Instagrammable Destination**

*Lénia Marques*  
*Erasmus University Rotterdam*  
*Netherlands*  
[marques@eshcc.eur.nl](mailto:marques@eshcc.eur.nl)

*Outi Niininen*  
*Eda Kop*  
*Jay Lee*  
*Clare d'Souza*

Destination Management Organisations (DMO's) use a range of strategies and channels to convey their messages. In the last two decades, social media has gained importance in the communication strategies of DMO's. Instagram in particular has served different objectives, including reaching certain (younger) target audiences, becoming a powerful tool using a combination of pictures, video and text, some of which are produced outside the DMO's by final "users" (user-generated content). While cultural assets play an important role in the city's image, little is known about how Intangible Cultural Heritage is used.

In this paper, we will investigate how cities DMO's use and portray Intangible Cultural Heritage, exploring processes of simplification and their implications. The sample consists of images and text from the official DMO's Instagram accounts of three capital cities in Europe: Lisbon, Helsinki and Amsterdam. With a dataset of 19.000 units of analysis (image and text), AI software is used to support the thematic data analysis.

Expected results point to patterns of simplification / essentialization of forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which, while necessary, are also reductionist in their approach. In the three cities, similar principles in processes of simplification, essentialisation and commodification can be observed, although the types of ICH as well as their overall representation in Instagram posts vary per city. Despite the challenging representational nature of ICH, and necessary simplification processes, DMO's could more actively seek to valorize and build on the richness of meanings and stories related to forms of ICH.

## **Determinants of Tourists' Transport Mode Choice to Access the High-Speed Rail Station at Camp de Tarragona**

*Maria E. Medina-Chavarria*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[mariaesperanza.medina@urv.cat](mailto:mariaesperanza.medina@urv.cat)

*Daniel Miravet*  
[daniel.miravet@urv.cat](mailto:daniel.miravet@urv.cat)

*Aaron Gutiérrez*  
[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

Peripheral high-speed railway (HSR) stations face unique challenges related to their location outside urban centers, requiring travelers to navigate beyond urban boundaries to access them. Drawing on concepts of transport democratization and regional development through sustainable and accessible mobility, this study examines how the quality and availability of public transport connections shape the efficiency of HSR infrastructures. When public transport connections are inadequate, travelers have limited options to access the stations, primarily relying on private vehicles or taxis. This dependency not only has environmental repercussions for the territory – such as higher emissions and congestion-



but it can also exacerbate negative social exclusion, particularly for individuals who do not own or have access to private vehicles.

Tourism is particularly affected by these accessibility constraints. Poor public transport connectivity can discourage certain visitor profiles from using HSR to reach tourist destinations. This could ultimately limit the destination's ability to attract visitors and reduce the economic benefits that tourism can bring to the region. Although the literature has explored the challenges of peripheral HSR station placement, few studies have considered its implications for coastal tourism destinations, where connectivity plays a critical role in overcoming spatial disadvantages.

Focusing on the Camp de Tarragona region in southern Catalonia, Spain—a key economic and tourism hub anchored by the Costa Daurada—, this study examines the evolution of modal choices among high-speed rail (HSR) services' users accessing the HSR station. The study hypothesizes that improvements in public transport services on this region impact the mode of transport chosen by tourists when accessing the HSR station. To test this hypothesis, data were collected through two surveys conducted in the summers of 2014 and 2022. The survey has targeted travelers in the passenger boarding area of the HSR station. The questionnaire covered socio-demographic characteristics, travel details, and information about their stays. A conditional logit model was applied to calculate the probability of choosing one transport mode over another.

The results underline that improved public transport services are key determinants in shaping transport modal choices, and contribute to the diversification of visitors profiles- facilitating access for those visitors without private vehicles and encouraging more sustainable travel behaviors.

Furthermore, the results suggest that coastal destinations can successfully leverage peripheral HSR infrastructure if accompanied by strong public transport connectivity. This is particularly relevant from a sustainability perspective, since sun-and-beach locations often attract longer stays, amplifying the positive impact of sustainable access solutions.

Beyond the case presented on this study, our insights contribute to broader debates on equitable mobility and regional tourism development. Such results can have implications for regional transport governance and strategic planning, particularly in enhancing connectivity and sustainability at the destination. Future research might extend the analysis to whether similar dynamics play out in other peripheral HSR stations contexts, particularly in relation to sustainable destination accessibility accessible mobility.

## **The Spatiotemporal Concentration of Cruise Passengers in Barcelona: An Analysis of Mobility Patterns Through GPS Data**

*Veronica Mejia*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[veronica.mejia@urv.cat](mailto:veronica.mejia@urv.cat)

*Aaron Gutiérrez*  
[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

*Xavier Delclòs-Alió*  
[xavier.delclos@urv.cat](mailto:xavier.delclos@urv.cat)

The accelerated growth of cruise tourism in recent decades (Cruise Market Watch, 2021) has raised a series of questions about the impacts of this industry on local economies, sociocultural dynamics, cultural identity, use of the space, and environmental quality (Lloret et al., 2021; Renaud, 2020). In particular, controversies have arisen in the most popular destinations, where the high volume of visitors has originated processes of tourist massification (Jacobsen et al., 2019).

In addition to these intense flows, it must be considered that the cruise passengers' visit presents a temporal limitation, which in turn means spatial limitations (Ellegård & Svedin, 2012; Miller, 2017). The chosen trajectories converge on the main tourist points of interest, which is why the majority of hotspots suffer from overcrowding (Brandajs & Russo, 2019; Rubio, 2020). Also, these intense flow

dynamics occur more intensively in areas close to the port (De Cantis et al., 2016). In short, the temporal limitation, convergence of trajectories, and dependence on the port restrict the spatio-temporal behavior of cruise passengers, negatively affecting the balanced development of the destination in general (García-Palomares et al., 2015).

In this context, the mobility patterns of cruise passengers generate a series of conflicts related to the use of the public space, such as hotspot crowding (Aall & Koens, 2019) and the concentration of tourist services in areas of special interest (Vaquero et al., 2018). Thus, there is also a greater demand for public and private transportation for trips within the city and from the port, leading to increased pressure on public services. Additionally, it is important to note the specialization of markets aimed at tourists, displacing other uses linked to the local population (Brandajs & Russo, 2019). In short, it is evident that by increasing the tourist presence, the dynamics on the activity spaces (Jr, 1968). and the relationship with the residents have been altered (Whyte, 2001). In this context, it is not surprising that certain negative perceptions arise about tourism (Elorrieta et al., 2022) and especially about tourist massification (Jacobsen et al., 2019). For this reason, some studies have pointed out that this situation makes it difficult to reconcile the activities of tourists and locals (Ballester, 2015).

The case of Barcelona exemplifies this problematic. The cruise flows have intensified, exceeding 3 million visitors per year, which has especially altered the dynamics related to the use of public space (Brandajs & Russo, 2019). Furthermore, at a general level, the resulting visual and spatial saturation has led to social tensions (Hughes, 2018), displacement of residents (Rubio, 2020), as well as economic, urban, and territorial transformations (Fava & Palou Rubio, 2017).

In this context, while progress has been made in analyzing spatial patterns, there remains insufficient information to adequately characterize this tourist concentration. Therefore, there is a need to provide additional scientific evidence to better understand this problem and its implications. Thus, the study aimed to characterize the spatio-temporal distribution patterns of cruise passengers visiting Barcelona and also aimed to identify possible differences between mobility patterns based on the profiles of cruise passengers. Additionally, it was deemed appropriate to analyze in more detail the main areas of tourist interest.

## **"Liveability" in a Medium-Sized City Destination: Trier's Experience with High Tourist Intensity**

*Michael Mießner*  
Trier University  
Germany  
[miessner@uni-trier.de](mailto:miessner@uni-trier.de)

This presentation explores why overtourism is not a concern in the medium-sized city destination of Trier, Germany, despite its high tourism intensity.

As the oldest city in Germany, Trier – with around 110,000 inhabitants – is also home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites and attracts around half a million tourists annually, despite its small size. This results in a high tourism intensity of 4.2 tourist arrivals per resident, comparable to Barcelona and higher than in Rome or Munich. Conflicts between residents and tourists would therefore be expected, as seen in other high tourist cities. However, despite the sharp increase in vacation rentals and the associated revenues over the last three years, our survey conducted among Trier's residents reveals very few signs of overtourism. According to Milano et al. (2019), overtourism was defined in the study as "the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have enforced permanent changes to their lifestyle, access to amenities, and general well-being."

To identify where most tourists actually stay, the first step was to map the locations using an Instagram analysis. The analysis shows a high concentration of tourists at a few spots in the city centre, such as the Trier landmark Porta Nigra (a Roman-era city gate), the Roman baths, and the amphitheatre. For the online survey of residents, 3,000 flyers were distributed across all districts of the city in mailboxes. A total of 200 people participated in the survey. The questionnaire asked, for example, how often individuals interact with tourists, what experiences they have had with them, and whether they believe tourists impact their everyday life. Although the survey reveals a slightly

increased negative impact on residents in the city centre, overall, tourism acceptance in the city remains very high.

The presentation presents these research findings on Trier as a tourist destination and discusses possible reasons for the low impact of tourism on quality of life and the greater acceptance of tourism in the city. It identifies governmental regulations, the concentration of tourism in the city centre, the significant economic contribution of tourism revenues, and the city's long-standing experience in dealing with tourists as key factors for this higher level of tourism acceptance. The article concludes that local conditions in destinations are of great relevance to the "liveability" of a tourist destination and should, therefore, be given greater consideration in urban governance and destination management.

### **Beyond the glass: Can aquarium diving foster emotional connections and inspire environmental care?**

*Francesca Milan*  
*Polytechnic University of Marche*  
*Italy*  
[duratta@gmail.com](mailto:duratta@gmail.com)

*Serena Lucrezi*  
*North-West University*  
*South Africa*  
[23952997@nwu.ac.za](mailto:23952997@nwu.ac.za)

We are currently facing a biodiversity crisis, with unprecedented species loss, largely caused by human actions like pollution, habitat damage, climate change, and non-sustainable use of natural resources. We need to change our modern societies and human behavior to reverse this crisis. Recent studies suggest that emotions play an important role in human psychology, particularly in developing and maintaining environmentally responsible behaviors. This is where wildlife tourism comes in and plays a crucial role. By offering visitors the chance to connect with animals and nature on an emotional level, wildlife tourism fosters appreciation and respect. Ultimately, these positive emotions can translate into a strong motivation to protect the very species encountered, driving individuals to become advocates for conservation. This study investigated potential changes in tourists' attitudes towards marine life after participating in diving and snorkeling programs within the main aquarium tank at Atlantis Dubai. Additionally, it explored the development of emotional connection with the ocean, conservation-oriented mindsets, and intentions to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. The core objective was to determine whether close interaction with fish, sharks, and rays within a realistic exhibit fostered appreciation and concern for marine life, ultimately empowering visitors to make environmentally responsible choices. A total of 346 participants were surveyed using questionnaires, with 172 completing the survey before the experience and 174 completing it afterwards. Statistical comparison of the pre-experience and post-experience groups revealed a significant increase in positive feelings towards sharks and rays. This shift included a sense of connection and respect for these marine animals. The program also impacted the participants' attitudes toward sharks, increasing their likelihood of supporting efforts to protect them. While the diving and snorkeling programs fostered a stronger connection with the ocean and increased participants' commitment to recycling their waste more diligently, their overall conservation attitude and willingness to engage in other pro-environmental behaviors (beach clean-ups, responsible seafood consumption, donations, and education) remained unchanged. Despite the program not leading to immediate improvements in broader conservation attitudes or intentions to engage in pro-environmental daily practices, it did cultivate a significant appreciation for sharks and rays, even though these are potentially dangerous animals. This might contribute to the conservation of these species. The increased positive emotions towards sharks led to an audience with a better perception of these creatures, a stronger conservation attitude and a higher commitment to environmental sustainability. A deeper ocean connectedness proved to be the key factor in reducing the fear of sharks rather than the interaction itself. In conclusion, aquaria can be powerful conservation tools, but

seeing marine life isn't enough. To truly inspire action, they must create emotional connections between visitors and the ocean. Aquaria can encourage people to care more about the environment by designing exhibits and interactions that foster this connection. This study also highlights the need for more targeted messaging and strategies, as current approaches may not lead to significant changes in visitor behavior.

## **Invisible workers within the tourism labour force**

*Claudio Milano*  
*University of Barcelona*  
*Spain*  
[claudiomilano@ub.edu](mailto:claudiomilano@ub.edu)

Tourism has experienced unprecedented growth since the early 2000s, emerging as a major driver of economic development in numerous destinations worldwide. This expansion has been met with enthusiasm from local economies, which have capitalised on the influx of visitors as a source of revenue and employment. However, this growth has also generated significant scrutiny due to its socio-economic impacts on host communities. One area of concern is the labour regimes within the tourism sector, which have come under critical examination for their role in perpetuating inequality, precarity and exploitation.

The core research question addressed in this paper is: How have informal employment practices within the tourism sector evolved, and what are their implications for migrant workers' rights and conditions?

This study hypothesises that the informality in the tourism sector has intensified, particularly in response to the rise of platform-based economic models. It further posits that these informal employment practices exacerbate the vulnerability of workers (most of them migrants) by undermining job security and labour rights. Additionally, the paper suggests that informal employment is strategically advantageous for employers who seek to minimise operational costs and avoid regulatory burdens. The research is based in the city of Barcelona and employs a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive insights into the informal employment landscape within the tourism sector. Fieldwork includes participant observation and semi-structured interviews conducted with informal workers across various tourism-related occupations. These methods enable an in-depth exploration of the working conditions, experiences, and challenges faced by workers operating outside formal employment structures. The study also examines the broader economic and structural factors that contribute to the prevalence of informal work in tourism.

This ongoing research reveals preliminary findings of a notable increase in informal employment within the tourism sector, driven by the rise of platform-based economic models. Early observations indicate that informal work is prevalent in areas such as short-term rental platforms, tourism property brokerage, housekeeping services, tourist guiding, urban mobility services, and street vending. These informal roles often lack formal contracts, job security, and regulatory oversight, contributing to precarious working conditions. A significant proportion of informal workers are migrants who are attracted to the tourism sector due to its low entry barriers and minimal requirements for professionalisation. The study also notes that the high seasonality of tourism exacerbates the instability of informal employment. The preliminary findings of this research suggest that employers leverage these conditions to minimise fixed costs, evade tax obligations, and maximise profits, often at the expense of workers' rights and well-being. As the research progresses, it aims to provide a more detailed understanding of these dynamics and their broader implications for the tourism sector and informal workers.

## **Tourist mobility patterns in urban destinations: the role of mobility intensity in Barcelona**

*Daniel Miravet Arnau*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili Department*  
*Spain*  
[daniel.miravet@urv.cat](mailto:daniel.miravet@urv.cat)

*Michele Terraferma*

*Aaron Gutiérrez*  
[aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat](mailto:aaron.gutierrez@urv.cat)

The continuous growth of tourism flows and related mobilities at urban destinations leads to emerging challenges and potential negative externalities, impacting on sustainability and residents' quality of life. This situation, along with other related factors, creates objective and rational conditions of social discomfort, sometimes even leading to outright rejection of the tourism industry. In this line, it is key to understand tourists' mobility dynamics during their stay since this knowledge is critical to plan mobility services that suit tourists' needs without causing disturbances to residents. At the same time, destination managers must take into account that mobility is a key component of the tourist product and therefore, yields an impact on visitors' experience. For this reason, tourists must be able to reach what they intend to visit under acceptable conditions of comfort and service quality. Within this issue, the authors of this article aim to analyse and discuss a novel dimension of tourist mobility, termed mobility intensity. This concept is defined as the number of journeys a tourist makes from one point to another within the destination perimeter during a single day of visit. The study seeks to determine whether mobility intensity can be predicted based on a set of variables related to tourist profiles and at the same time, whether it is useful to account for certain tourists' behaviours.

The study leverages data from an on-the-street mobility survey launched in 2022, that reached a sample of 2,208 valid questionnaires. This survey is to the best of our knowledge the most ambitious initiative to collect information related to visitors' mobility in terms of degree of detail of the information gathered and number of questionnaires. Tourists were asked to provide wide information on each of their journeys across the city during the day prior to the interview, including origin and destination, time and duration, motivation and mode of transport chosen. To identify the key determinants of mobility intensity, a duration regression model is employed, while latent class analysis (LCA) is used to define behavioural profiles. The results of the duration model signal that certain characteristics of the tourism trip and the visitor are crucial determinants of tourists' mobility intensity. As expected, mobility intensity is useful to unveil different mobility and spatial behaviours.

This research contributes to the ongoing theoretical discussion on tourist mobility in urban destinations by introducing the concept of mobility intensity. On a practical level, it aims to provide guidelines for the planning and management of tourist mobility in destinations which are particularly sensitive to this phenomenon, such as major European cities. Furthermore, this is the first attempt to introduce and explore the concept of mobility intensity within the evolving discourse on urban tourist mobility. The results obtained stem from a large, segmented sample covering multiple visitor categories, offering valuable insights for both academic research and destination management.



## Measuring Sustainability in Hotels: A Practical Tool Based on International Standards

Daissy Moya  
Universitat de Girona  
Spain  
[daissy.moya@udg.edu](mailto:daissy.moya@udg.edu)

Joaquim Majó

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in the development of sustainable destinations, given its significant environmental, social, and economic impacts. In Colombia, the adoption of sustainable practices is guided by the Technical Colombian Standard (NTC) 6503:2021, which establishes sustainability requirements for accommodation establishments. This standard aligns with international frameworks, including ISO 21401:2018, which focuses on environmental management, social responsibility, and economic viability. However, despite the existence of this regulatory framework, hotel operators face challenges in effectively measuring and implementing sustainable practices due to a lack of practical tools.

This research aims to design and validate a practical and accessible instrument that enables hoteliers to measure sustainability in their establishments according to international standards. The study seeks to bridge the gap between regulatory compliance and practical application, providing a user-friendly tool to guide hotels in assessing their sustainability performance and identifying areas for improvement.

The research objectives are:

- To identify key sustainability indicators within the international standards and evaluate their applicability in different types of hotels
- To design a measurement tool with precise assessment scales across environmental, social, and economic dimensions
- To validate the instrument through pilot testing in a variety of hotels in Colombia, and
- To analyze the results and propose strategic recommendations to enhance the implementation of sustainable practices in the hospitality industry.

The methodology involves a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis of the international standards requirements and quantitative data collection from pilot testing. A questionnaire and checklist format will be developed, ensuring ease of use and accurate measurement. The instrument will be tested in hotels of different sizes and categories, allowing for adjustments based on user feedback. Validity and reliability will be assessed using statistical methods, ensuring the tool's robustness.

The expected outcomes of this research include a validated measurement instrument tailored to the Colombian hospitality sector, which can be easily adapted for use in other destinations. The tool will enable hotels to evaluate their sustainability performance systematically and align their practices with international standards. Additionally, the study aims to raise awareness among hotel operators about the importance of measuring and communicating sustainability performance as a competitive advantage in the market.

By presenting this research at the ATLAS Congress under the theme "Sustainable destinations: bringing together economic, social, and environmental perspectives," the study contributes to the global discourse on sustainable tourism. It offers practical solutions for hotels to enhance their sustainability efforts, thereby supporting the development of sustainable destinations. Moreover, the research emphasizes the importance of integrating economic, social, and environmental perspectives, fostering a holistic approach to sustainability in the hospitality industry.

This investigation provides a practical tool for hotel managers and contributes to academic knowledge by offering a replicable model for sustainability measurement in hospitality. It seeks to inspire further research on the application of sustainability standards and their impact on sustainable destination development.



## Contested Heritage and Conflict of Narratives

*Rajesh Nautiyal*  
*University of Lincoln*  
*United Kingdom*  
[rnautiyal@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:rnautiyal@lincoln.ac.uk)

“Heritage is not an objective entity out there waiting to be discovered or identified; rather, it is more usefully seen as constituted and constructed” (Wu and Hou, 2015, p. 37) through variety of narratives. These narratives are often originated and emerge from various sources (Harrison, 2013) such as local folklore, government records and accounts, historical interpretation, and even extreme viewpoints and conspiracy theories. Though these narratives (should be and) are based on scientific archaeological excavations, they tend to get highly influenced by political and socio-cultural dynamics of the location/destination (Harrison, 2010). This in turn may lead to sanitisation, alteration, manipulation and even suppression of certain aspects of (visible) history. Thus, this study examines the role of storytelling in (re)shaping the multiple narratives, perception, and transitions in Qutub Minar Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Delhi, using autoethnographic accounts gathered through my visits to the chosen site since 2011.

Autoethnography as methodology allows a “nuanced, complex, and specific knowledge” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 228), connecting personal to the cultural” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Based on reflective accounts of my numerous visits with a range of family members, friends, teachers, guides, and alone, along with extensive reading of diverse historical records and discussions with fellow travellers, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the historical and cultural context of the chosen site. Applying Foucault’s ideas of power and knowledge, this study distinguishes between those in power, such as government officials, guides, and established historians, and common visitors, (local) communities who have (very) less authority in these discourses.

A central theme that emerges with this examination is how the official guide often tends to sanitise or even sometimes (intentionally) omit the controversial historical facts. This selective presentation reflects Foucault’s ideas of power, where those in power may often manipulate narratives and discourses to maintain social cohesion and to appease certain political segments. The main purpose of such narratives is often planned or influenced to maintain the preservation of ‘harmonious’ national identity and social cohesion by keeping a linear historical narrative (Hashimoto, 2011) often suppressing the uncomfortable truths.

Furthermore, not everyone is able to afford or maybe want to hire a guide to interpret the Qutub Minar complex. Thus, many such visitors rely on the information provided by the Archaeological Survey of India at the site. However, as observed collective memories and local gossips along with now easy access to the multilingual internet facilities often retell sensational (or controversial) stories (Antonella et al., 2023). In many cases, these stories reflect the tensions and anxieties of unaddressed issues within many communities. Thus, the stories and narratives of visitors challenge the ‘official’ historical accounts mirrors the Foucault’s ideas of power and knowledge, where established historians’ linear histories to glorify invaders are often contested by these alternative narratives.

## **Exploring the Synergy Between Film and Heritage at Cinematheque Passion**

*Chin Ee Ong*  
*Macao University of Tourism*  
*Macao SAR, China*  
[ceong.geography@gmail.com](mailto:ceong.geography@gmail.com)

*Orson Wong*

This study explores the emerging synergy between film culture and architectural heritage through a case study of Cinematheque Passion in Macao. Using qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the study examines how film programming and heritage preservation can create meaningful cultural experiences. The research identifies three key dimensions of synergy: spatial (architectural adaptation), narrative (programming and storytelling), and social (community engagement). While preliminary findings suggest potential for rich cultural integration, they also reveal challenges in balancing preservation requirements with modern cultural needs. This early-stage investigation contributes to broader discussions about adaptive reuse of heritage buildings for cultural purposes and offers initial insights into effective models for cultural development in historic settings.

## **How arts, festivals and their online solutions generate rural development**

*Natalia Oszko Jakab*  
*Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation / Valley of Arts Festival*  
*Hungary*  
[jakab.natalia@muveszetekvolgye.hu](mailto:jakab.natalia@muveszetekvolgye.hu)

The presentation would describe activities of the Arts for Rural Development Foundation and the Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation (MTPA) and details how they support online solutions for festival tourism and sustainability. It would be presented how Arts for Rural Development Foundation festivals can be a tool for rural development. The Valley of Arts Festival and the Kerekdomb Festival are outstanding examples of cultural events which have had a long-term impact on the region's economy and community. The Foundation's mission is to boost the economy of rural areas and to preserve and promote local cultural and built heritage. Involving volunteers and partners, excellent communication and sustainable methods, the events actively support rural development.

## **Accessible tourism labels: European Union perspective**

*Hana Paleka*  
*University of Rijeka*  
*Croatia*  
[hana.paleka@uniri.hr](mailto:hana.paleka@uniri.hr); [hana.paleka@fmtu.uniri.hr](mailto:hana.paleka@fmtu.uniri.hr)

*Jelena Đurkin Badurina*  
[jelenad@fthm.hr](mailto:jelenad@fthm.hr)

*Daniela Soldić Frleta*  
[danielas@fthm.hr](mailto:danielas@fthm.hr)

As the tourism industry continues to expand, ensuring the provision of clear information on the level of accessibility of tourism offer is not only a matter of legal compliance, but also a means of enhancing social inclusion and economic opportunity. The significance of this topic lies in the growing recognition

of the importance of inclusive tourism, which plays a crucial role in ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities or limitations, can participate in and benefit from travel experiences. In particular, it is important to provide adequate information on the existence or non-existence of accessible products and services.

This study examines information on accessibility in tourism across the EU member countries through an analysis of available labelling schemes and related web information from an international tourist perspective. The research focuses on understanding the information availability in tourism offerings for potential tourists with specific needs.

Using a two-stage methodology, the study first assesses the general state of accessibility information and the prevalence of tourism accessibility labels across EU member countries. In the second stage, an in-depth analysis evaluates the characteristics of available labels, including their geographic scope, user focus, number of labelled facilities and destinations, verification processes, and educational components.

The findings reveal significant disparities in the implementation and communication of accessibility and inclusion measures, providing insights into best practices and identifying gaps in current approaches.

This research contributes to the broader understanding of accessible tourism and offers recommendations for improving information on available accessible offer across the EU tourism market, making it relevant to policymakers, tourism providers, and advocacy groups working towards a more equitable and accessible tourism landscape.

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## **Hotel Industry's Instagram Iconography: The Visual Codes of Seaside versus Mountainous Resorts**

*Eirini Papadaki*  
*Hellenic Mediterranean University*  
*Greece*  
[eirpapadaki@hmu.gr](mailto:eirpapadaki@hmu.gr)

Digital visibility in a highly competitive sector such as the hotel industry, especially in popular tourist destinations, such as Greece, is considered as an essential communication strategy, as it has been connected to brand awareness and performance. Research has not given appropriate attention to the levels of interactivity and user-generated content produced and parameters such as people and local attractions in the iconography. The aim of this research is to highlight and categorize the visual codes and patterns of the hotel industry on social media through the case study of the hotels in popular Greek islands versus mountainous resorts. The paper examines the iconography of 150 hotels on Instagram (75 in popular Greek islands and 75 in winter destinations in mainland Greece) for a one year period (2024). Choice was made based on the number of the hotels' followers in their official Instagram accounts, the frequency of their posting and the multi-lingual content of their posts. Apart from features and location scenery, the authors studied parameters such as people and local attractions and tried to measure the levels of interactivity and user-generated content that the hotels of the study encourage. The dataset selected was the hotels' posts for a one-year period (2024) and was categorized using conceptual content analysis. The authors decontextualized the signs of the hotels and chose the following signification meaning units: "images of the hotel infrastructure", "local landmarks and attractions", "location and scenery", "romantic gaze", "images of offered services", "special events", "staff/people", "remediation images", "customers' posts/stories re-posts". The main schemata of the iconography of the Greek island hotels were highlighted and interpreted in parallel ways to Urry and Larsen's (2011) "tourist gaze". As much of the hotel industry iconography will be used as the background for the tourists' selfies and snapshots, hotels' Instagram posts visualize parts of the tourists' future experiences in the destination. Agreeing with Cuesta-Valiño et al. (2023), the research concluded in several "selling" hotel image properties, such as light and time of the photo shooting, image colour scheme, human presence and shooting angle, as well as recognizable place-

myths and sign-symbols of the destination. The study succeeds in making a theoretical contribution concerning the categorisation of visual codes that other researchers may employ. The study's conclusions are useful to hotel marketing specialists and researchers on communication and social media, as well as anyone interested in visual signification in the hotel industry and visual culture in tourism.

## **Social Cohesion and Sustainability in Traditional Music Festivals in Crete**

*Eirini Papadaki*  
*Hellenic Mediterranean University*  
*Greece*  
[eirpapadaki@hmu.gr](mailto:eirpapadaki@hmu.gr)

*Eleftheria Vassilaki*

Community-based tourism is nowadays seen as an important part of sustainable tourism development (Mmeko et al, 2013). It is based on the participation and engagement of local residents (Dahal et al, 2020) and their involvement in the preparation of the tourist setting or “scene” (Ederson, 2001, Urry & Larsen, 2011), either by participating in the decision-making process (Mosse, 2001), running tourism businesses (Williams & Baláž, 2021) or by participating in local events.

The involvement of locals is crucial in enhancing the entire tourist experience in many types of tourism, such as creative tourism. Communities create, carry and use cultural resources (Keitumetse, 2011) and are therefore their most avid promoters. Although local residents may feel overwhelmed by the influx of tourists in their neighbourhoods, it appears that many of them actively participate in activities specifically tailored for tourists. This phenomenon is referred to as the touristification of everyday life by Larsen (2008), leading to the commodification of culture (Bellow et al, 2020) or Richard’s “colonization of the lifeworld” (2020). Urry’s concept of the “tourist gaze”, Edensor’s (2001) idea of performativity in tourism, and the “co-creation” concept in tourism by Pappalepore & Smith (2016) highlight that in many instances, both hosts and guests play a significant role in shaping the actual experience and consequently, the destination itself (Papadaki et al., forthcoming). The roles can interchange, as demonstrated by Wynn’s (2011) explanation of how tour guiding in a place like New York can transform New Yorkers into tourists and tourists into New Yorkers. The involvement of local residents in tourism activities has been acknowledged in the literature as a significant aspect of tourism planning (Chambers, 2002).

This paper examines three traditional music festivals in Crete, as successful case studies that promote cohesion and community engagement: Hamezi Festival (Lassithi Prefecture), Houdetsi Festival (Heraklion Prefecture) and Meronas Festival (Rethymno Prefecture). For the purposes of the current research, the research team collected data through fieldwork research in the three villages the festivals take place, between October 2024 and June 2025. The research team made several visits to the selected villages and conducted interviews with local residents, hotel owners and presidents of the villages’ Cultural Associations, as well as tourists present in the area during the visits. Additional data was collected through digital ethnography tools, as researchers recorded and studied the presence and visibility of the villages and the music festivals in the digital semiosphere, as well as the users’—both the villages’ residents and visitors—comments.

The research concludes that a large part of the villages’ residents, regardless of age, gender, income or occupation, take part in the festivals, acquiring a sense of continuity, empowerment and pride, as they themselves argued to the research team. The local population possesses the ability to offer authentic and unique insights not only into the traditional music played during the festivals, but also on past stories and/or other aspects of local tradition, like food. All inhabitants have equal opportunities to participate in the music festivals and this fact testifies inclusiveness, social integration and cohesion, enstrengthening social sustainability.

## Addressing Governance Complexities: Insights from Stakeholders on Adaptive Strategies during Transitions in the Ebro Delta Destination

Ana Pastor Alcaraz  
Universitat Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[ana.pastor@urv.cat](mailto:ana.pastor@urv.cat)

Isabel Paulino  
[isabel.paulino@udq.edu](mailto:isabel.paulino@udq.edu)

In recent years, the concept of destination resilience—defined as a destination's ability to adapt and absorb disturbances while maintaining socio-ecological functions—has gained attention among tourism researchers (Amore, Prayag, & Hall, 2018; Hartman, 2018; Innerhofer, Fontanari, & Pechlaner, 2018). Tourism destinations situated at the intersection of ecological and socio-economic factors highlight the interplay between resilience, governance frameworks, and ecosystem services. However, tourism is often viewed solely as an economic activity, and considering resilience in isolation fails to capture its vulnerabilities and the hybrid nature of change. Destinations function as complex socio-ecological systems where ecological, social, political, and economic spheres are interconnected, making isolated study impractical (Hall, 2018; Petrosillo et al., 2006).

The conceptualization of resilience depends on the legal and geographical competencies of the state at various levels. However, fragmented territorial jurisdictions limit public administrations' authority to address tourism-related changes or develop adequate mechanisms. Local administrations, despite their proximity to territorial issues, often lack jurisdiction over entire destinations due to municipal or county divisions, restricting their ability to enforce adaptive responses. This jurisdictional gap weakens cohesive governance, emphasizing the need for effective mediation across state levels and sectors (Amore et al., 2018; Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Effective governance relies on integrating stakeholder perspectives and building capacities for coordinated responses, yet coordination remains suboptimal due to administrative delays.

This study explores the Ebro Delta, a rural Catalan destination marked by political complexity and overlapping governance structures. These gaps jeopardize the management of a fragile ecosystem threatened by coastal regression, river salinization, overcrowding in sensitive areas, and broader socio-economic challenges such as climate change, unemployment, youth migration, and an aging population.

To analyze governance systems shaping tourism resilience, a qualitative approach was adopted, employing semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Interviews were based on governance and resilience frameworks, incorporating collaborative success factors (Zumbusch & Scherer, 2015), principles of good governance (UNDP, 1997), and strategic crisis management in tourism (Ritchie, 2004). The study examines five key dimensions: governance structure and stakeholder participation, strategic vision and planning, resource management, communicative, legal, and ethical capacity, and control and evaluation mechanisms.

Twenty representatives from the Ebro Delta were interviewed, selected through a network-based approach (Scott et al., 2008) to ensure representation from political, economic, social, and ecological sectors. Interviews, lasting 30–90 minutes, were conducted in person, transcribed, and systematically coded to identify governance barriers and opportunities for strengthening tourism resilience.

Findings indicate that hierarchical governance structures, entrenched territorial attachments, and insufficient inter-administrative collaboration impede effective decision-making. Moreover, higher-level public administrations are often reluctant to engage in collaborative planning, weakening governance structures in tourism destinations and hindering timely implementation of resilience-focused policies (Blasco, Guia, & Prats, 2014; Ilbery & Saxena, 2010; Paulino, Prats, & Domenech, 2021; Ruhanen, 2012). Ultimately, these findings underscore the need for integrated governance frameworks capable of addressing multi-level administrative challenges, contributing to a deeper understanding of tourism destinations as complex socio-ecological systems. The methodological approach provides a comprehensive perspective on governance dynamics and their capacity to respond effectively to socio-ecological changes, from anticipatory strategies to crisis management and recovery.



## Exploring Sustainable De-growth in Marine and Coastal Tourism: Perspectives of Socio-ecological Stakeholders in Malaysia

*Isabel Paulino*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[isabel.paulino@udg.edu](mailto:isabel.paulino@udg.edu)

*Nadzirah Hosen*  
*Amran Hamzah*

Marine and coastal tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global tourism industry. At the same time, it faces increasing scrutiny for its socio-ecological impacts, including environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic inequities. These issues are further accentuated by overcrowding, resource depletion, and habitat destruction, which reveal the limitations of traditional tourism models that prioritize economic growth over ecological and social well-being. In response, sustainable de-growth has emerged as a concept to address these challenges (Kallis, 2011), advocating for a reduction in tourism activities to restore ecological balance, enhance local livelihoods, and promote socio-ecological resilience (Akhoundoghli & Boluk, 2024). By shifting away from an anthropocentric focus to a post-humanist, sustainable de-growth seeks to reimagine marine and coastal tourism governance to benefit natural ecosystems and marginalized communities (Guia & Jamal, 2024). However, significant gaps persist in understanding the broader implications of implementing tourism de-growth. It is essential to examine who benefits from de-growth strategies and whether these benefits are equitably distributed among communities, tourism operators, policymakers, and ecosystems (Hall, 2018; Meerow & Newell, 2016; Paulino, Pastor-Alcaraz & Russo, 2025). De-growth policies risk exacerbating inequalities among vulnerable groups reliant on tourism, and the feasibility of sustaining marine and coastal tourism without de-growth remains underexplored. Addressing these gaps is vital for developing governance models that balance ecological restoration and socio-economic development (Berkes & Ross, 2013, Hosen, Paulino & Hamzah, 2024). This study applies the principles of sustainable de-growth to Semporna, Sabah, a renowned coastal destination in a developing country grappling with the impacts of mass tourism. Unchecked tourism has led to coral bleaching, anchor damage, and marine debris, threatening both biodiversity and local livelihoods. Efforts to address these challenges include the development of a marine spatial plan by WWF, aiming to balance conservation priorities with sustainable tourism practices. Using qualitative research, this study engages key stakeholders, including local communities, tourism operators, public administrations, and ecological organizations like WWF, to explore the feasibility and implications of sustainable de-growth in mitigating these challenges. The study examines the distribution of benefits and burdens across socio-ecological dimensions, focusing on risks of inequality and the challenges of managing tourist movement in overused marine and coastal regions. Among various possible approaches, the integration of community resources and understanding of local needs ensures that decision-making reflects the diverse viewpoints and interests within the socio-ecological system (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2022). Central to this process is fostering a dialogue rooted in critical awareness, collaborative development, and transformative outcomes, carried out transparently, fairly, and inclusively. It emphasises criteria such as urgency, practicality, and the impact on the most vulnerable, all while aiming for long-term sustainability. This study provides valuable insights into sustainable de-growth as a transformative approach to ensuring the sustainability of marine and coastal ecosystems while meeting the needs of its communities.



## AR in heritage sites: a catalyst for tourism development in peripheral areas

Irene Pinto  
University Rovira i Virgili  
Spain  
[irene.pinto@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:irene.pinto@estudiants.urv.cat)

Bibiana León  
Assumpció Huertas

Peripheral areas are typically characterised by weak services and infrastructures, constraining their tourism potential. The increasing adoption of advanced digital technologies, such as Augmented Reality (AR), are able to address the low visibility and reputation of such destinations, enhancing their appeal. AR technologies also offer solutions for heritage preservation, enhance the visitor experience, and foster increased knowledge among visitors. This study explores the application of AR in the cave paintings at Abrics de l'Ermita, a peripheral heritage site in Ulldecona, southern Catalonia, Spain. The study is grounded on a theoretical model that links AR technology with ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) strategies to maximise tourism development in peripheral destinations. It outlines how AR can serve as a catalyst for heritage preservation and knowledge transfer while emphasising the necessity of strategic communication to broaden its impact.

The paper employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with a variety of local and non-local stakeholders, quantitative visitor and tourist data, and the analysis of online communication (i.e., the Ulldecona Tourism website and its main social media channels). The study investigates the impacts of AR on heritage preservation, valorisation, and knowledge transfer, as well as the ICT role in the increase of non-local visitors and tourists.

Findings demonstrate that, while AR contributes to physical preservation of heritage, it also supports knowledge raising, allowing visitors to engage with tangible and intangible aspects of heritage, fostering deeper awareness and understanding. Despite these benefits, the study emphasises that AR alone is insufficient to attract non-local visitors to peripheral destinations. Thus, effective online communication strategies are essential to raise awareness of the site's existence and promote AR experiences to wider audiences. Without effective online communication and promotion strategies, the potential of AR to diversify the audience and attract tourists to the peripheral destination remains unfulfilled.

The research identifies gaps in the current use of ICT by the Ulldecona Tourism Office. While AR has enhanced the visitor experience, the lack of a robust communication strategy limits the destination's potential to diversify audiences and attract tourists beyond regional boundaries. The analysis of online platforms reveals inconsistencies in content delivery, language barriers, and a predominantly local reach. Due to these shortcomings, the presence of an integrated ICT strategy was considered essential to leverage the AR application's full potential.

In conclusion, the paper suggests that while AR represents a transformative tool for heritage tourism, its effectiveness depends on complementary ICT strategies to ensure broader reach and engagement. The insights gained from the Ulldecona case study offer valuable guidelines for other peripheral destinations seeking to enhance their visibility, attract diverse audiences, and promote sustainable tourism development. Future research should focus on expanding data sources and exploring other case studies to further validate the proposed model and refine strategies for integrating AR and ICT in peripheral areas.

## **Inclusive Eventscapes: Using emotional-spatial mapping to interpret ultramarathon event experiences**

*Jess Porritt Best*  
*University of Westminster*  
*United Kingdom*  
[j.best@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:j.best@westminster.ac.uk)

The design and experience of running events is often ignored within the wider context of festivals and leisure events. As Hillman et al. (2021) highlight, active leisure events do exhibit significant inter-event variability and would benefit from a more informed discourse from events and tourism scholars. As events that engage a diverse range of communities around the world, an analysis of endurance running festivals, races, and events may highlight key ways that social sustainability can be advanced through intentional event design.

This paper will focus specifically on the application of the eventscape paradigm in practice using emotional-spatial maps as tools to deconstruct running event experiences and understand the broad range of experiences possible within a single event environment (Brown, 2020; Goldman, Gervis, & Griffiths, 2022). Mass participation sporting events (MPSEs) such as marathons and ultramarathons are studied as drivers of tourism or as generators of social, economic, political, or community capital for a destination but they are rarely explored from the perspective of the participant (Saayman & Saayman, 2012; Sato et al. 2014; Huang et al. 2015; Hautbois, Djaballah, & Desbordes, 2020). Even if event differences are recognised, the participant experience is often assumed to be homogenous. Exploring the impact of the individual participant's social, economic, gendered, and cultural context on their experience of the running eventscape provides valuable insights into the role of running events for leisure communities.

This paper outlines preliminary findings and highlights key themes emerging from my wider PhD project which explores the role of experience design and the participants personal context on their ability to achieve transformational experiences in ultramarathons. By utilising the eventscape paradigm it is possible to break down the experience of running endurance race, highlight key enablers or barriers to participation, and recommend changes to the way in which these events are run to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive running event spaces and communities.

## **Contrary Pulling Forces or Aligned Pushing Power in visits promotion? DMO's Vs. Local Tours**

*Lluís Prats*  
*Universitat de Girona*  
*Spain*  
[lluis.prats@udg.edu](mailto:lluis.prats@udg.edu)

*Isabel Paulino*  
[isabel.paulino@udg.edu](mailto:isabel.paulino@udg.edu)

Destination image has been extensively examined by scholars over the past two decades (Camprubí & Gassiot, 2023). Recent advancement in this field highlight the increasingly difficulty of controlling destination image due to the proliferation of multiple image generators, especially through new technologies, including the e-word of mouth (Chen & Law, 2016; Prats & Marin, 2014). This phenomenon, termed the “over-recommendation effect”, often results in destinations experiencing uncontrolled visitor flux, leading to overcrowding and massification at specific attractions or areas. Overcrowding poses significant challenges, including environmental degradation, reduced visitor satisfaction, strain in local infrastructure and conflicts with local population (Butler & Doods, 2022). Consequently, there has been growing interest in redistributing tourists flows to alleviate such pressures derived from the over recommendation effect. Many strategies have focused on studying tourists spatial fluxes and interests, as well as promoting alternative attractions and products, to achieve the relocation and distribution of tourists, thus minimizing the massification impacts.

Combining these two main research topics it is easy to extract two distinct forces: A) the ones clearly driving to an increasing level of overcrowding in destinations, such as the business search for scale economies and maximize sales, the tourist's desires and interests and the previous images of the destination, among others, and B) the ones aiming to reduce massification in destinations, such as official image, promoting alternative attractions and products, hiring bloggers and influencers to recommend differently, among others.

At a first glance, "A" forces are more linked to private stakeholders, mainly tourism businesses, while "B" forces are generated by public stakeholders, mainly DMO's. This situation seems to settle a confrontation of solutions that sounds difficult to handle, and in most destinations is being perpetuated without solution.

Thus, the main aim of this paper is to confront these existing contrary forces between destination DMO's and local tours industry, to better understand if different strategies might generate better performances balancing economic benefits and crowding control. Preliminary findings suggest that standard strategies from the DMO yield limited success for representing a confronted Pulling Force. This emphasizes the need of fostering aligned Pushing Power by collaborating with tourism stakeholders for the creation of a better balance in destination visits.

### **Next Generation Zoos preserving Planet Earth? The ranger as storyteller.**

*Wesley Put-van den Beemt*  
*Breda University of Applied Sciences*  
*Netherlands*  
[beemt.w@buas.nl](mailto:beemt.w@buas.nl)

*Moniek Hover*  
[hover.m@buas.nl](mailto:hover.m@buas.nl)

*Juriaan van Waalwijk*  
[waalwijk.j@buas.nl](mailto:waalwijk.j@buas.nl)

Zoos have traditionally served as a mix of entertainment and education (Carr & Cohen, 2015). However, they are increasingly positioning themselves as essential societal institutions, with a primary focus on animal conservation (Frost, 2010). Nowadays, zoos face growing scrutiny from animal activists and various political movements.

For most visitors, a trip to the zoo is primarily a joyful family outing in a natural setting with animals. This perception does not align with the evolving mission of zoos, which now emphasizes their crucial role in animal and nature conservation. Many zoos are expanding their mission beyond conserving endangered species to include supporting and improving natural habitats both near and far. The largest safari park in The Netherlands has taken its mission a step further, shifting from conserving endangered animal species to conserving Planet Earth. The idea is that zoos offer an excellent opportunity for visitors to be immersed in and enchanted by nature as a whole, not just the animals. The hope is that this will inspire visitors to actively protect what they love. The safari park aims to explore how storytelling can be used to convey their mission of conserving Planet Earth to visitors.

Emotional connections with story characters can lead to empathy and significant shifts in attitudes and beliefs (Mazzocco, Green, Sasota, & Jones, 2010). Throughout the story, the audience may even perceive the protagonist's choices as their own (McKee & Gerace, 2018). Stories told from a first-person perspective can be even more impactful (Pachucki, Grohs, & Scholl-Grissemann, 2022). If told effectively, storytelling can lead to experiences that are memorable, meaningful, and potentially transformational.

This presentation discusses a research experiment where two types of storytelling were used. The rangers at the safari park are a significant asset to the visitor experience. Zoo guests highly appreciate the personal connection with the rangers and their passion for working with animals. In the research experiment, we tested two story versions: the personal story of one of the rangers and a story about

an endangered animal. We conducted a quantitative study with 194 participants. At the end of a regular safari bus tour, participants were randomly exposed to either the 'ranger' story or the 'animal' story. Both groups were encouraged to do follow-up actions (plant flower seeds, cook a vegetarian recipe, support the Wildlife Foundation) after their visit.

Participants who were presented with the 'ranger' story reported significantly more positive emotions compared to those who heard the 'animal' story. They also engaged in more follow-up actions than the participants who were presented with the 'animal' story. Additionally, those who heard the 'ranger' story discussed their experience more frequently with others and were more inclined to recommend the safari bus tour to others compared to those who heard the 'animal' story.

Overall, this suggests that personal stories in the first person from rangers are more effective in conveying conservation messages at zoos than more generic stories about specific animal species facing extinction in the wild.

## **Perceived Animal Welfare in Animal-themed parks from Social Media: The Case of Chimelong**

*Shanshan Qi*

*Macao University of tourism*

*Macao SAR, China*

[shanshan@utm.edu.mo](mailto:shanshan@utm.edu.mo)

Zoos open to the public began in the late 18th century, and in recent decades, as the world has become increasingly concerned about the plight of wildlife and their natural habitats, the image of zoos has shifted to a tool for preserving endangered species and educating the public about conservation values (Carr, 2016). Animal-themed parks are a growing part of the tourism industry, and although popular, animal-themed tourism poses significant risks to animal welfare (Sperandio et al., 2012; Nguyen, 2013). Animals are often confined in small enclosures, forced to interact with tourists, or used for shows, entertainment, etc., or even killed. For example, welfare conditions for elephants, pig-tailed macaques and tigers are often grossly inadequate in facilities open to tourists in Thailand (Von Essen et al., 2020).

In this context, digital platforms play a key role as data providers in many tourism research topics, and the originality and authenticity of their data provide a genuine public perspective on research in the field of animal welfare. Mkono & Holder (2019) position social media as a digital realm for Collective Moral Reflexivity (CMR), using critical animal studies methodology to explore the killings of Cecil the lion, Marius the Giraffe, Harambe the Gorilla, and Xanda (Cecil's cub) as entry points for the digital movement and moral reflecting on how to shape the future of animals in tourism recreation field. Chimelong Paradise and Changlong International Ocean Resort are located in Guangzhou and Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China. It is a world-class tourist resort offering animal-related programs such as circus shows and animal displays (Xiaoying, 2018). To promote the “to boldly go” brand positioning, Chimelong Paradise has fully utilized various social medias in China, including Sina Weibo (<http://weibo.com/chparadise>, with 265,000 fans) and Tencent Weibo (<http://t.qq.com/CLkaka>, with more than 80,000 followers). With the comprehensive social media campaign, Changlong Paradise has established and disseminated its brand image to audiences and tourists, which has helped to increase public awareness (Zhu, 2014).

As a large Animal-themed Park and active on social platforms, the animal welfare of Chimelong Paradise and International Ocean Resort present in what kind of conditions in the public's descriptions? By collecting and combing the content of user reviews on popular social media platform, this study aims to reveal the public's perceptions and attitudes towards animal welfare in Chimelong, as well as the current state of public awareness of animal protection as reflected behind these comments. It explores the challenges and opportunities faced by Animal-themed parks in animal welfare.

## **Grindr and sex as leisure in tourism**

*Xudong Qiu*  
*University of Surrey*  
*United Kingdom*  
[xq00097@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:xq00097@surrey.ac.uk)

*Scott Cohen*  
[s.cohen@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:s.cohen@surrey.ac.uk)

*Jonathan Skinner*  
[jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk)

This study bridges the gap between technology and sex as leisure in tourism (Berdychevsky & Carr, 2020), specifically targeting MSM (Men who sleep with men) and the application of Grindr in facilitating the leisurely consumption of sex. Digital connectivity and the prevailing global digitisation movement have enacted a series of transformational social affordances (Bucher & Helmond, 2017; Bergström, 2019). In combination with the rapidly expanding mobility network and frequency to travel for socio-economically privileged segments of the population, new forms of intimate socialisation have transgressed the spatial constraints and become an integral element of tourism experiences (Leurs & Hardy, 2019). This socio-cultural adaptation to hyper-connectivity and hyper-mobility in relation to the pursuit of love and sex has given birth to the emerging phenomenon of mobile dating application (MDA) facilitated tourism experience (James, Condie & Lean, 2019). Especially in the case of MSM, Grindr is often used as a geolocative sexual platform for socialising, connecting and arranging sexual encounters with locals or other tourists during tourism experiences (Katz, 2020).

The research finding was based on 26 in-depth interviews with Grindr users in the UK, and it revealed a more wholistic perspective on Grindr's involvement in tourism, and deeper understanding of hindrances and risks in sex as leisure through technology. It also bridged a significant gap in the tourism context by examining how sexual cyberspace is incorporated into the mobility in the corporeal world for sexual socialisation, pleasure seeking and its impact on tourists' wellbeing. Firstly, there is a general separation between sex as leisure and other tourism activities such as sightseeing and dining. The consumption of sex and the sexual whilst away are more akin to the extension of users' daily digital practice at home. However, the fresh meat effect and travel as a quest for self-validation distinctly marked the boundary between them. Meeting up with other users for sex (e.g., hookup) during travel is mostly limited to solo travel. Secondly, the virtual consumption of the sexual (exchanging and collecting nude pictures, sexting) happened simultaneously with tourism activities alongside users' mobility, which was the primary source of gamified and fragmented leisurely consumption of sex and functioned as a second layer of reality in juxtaposition to the heteronormative environment. Risk seeking behaviours are an inherent excitement, pleasure and/or motivation of technologically mediated sexual experiences. Lastly, consuming sex as leisure in the cyberspace could turn into a fierce competition of self-commodification, and the level of sexual attention received during travel would render a tourism experience to be either fulfilling or invalidating. For users who were not successful sexually at home, going away became a quest of self-validation especially in solo travelling, which was not merely a hedonic indulgence of bodily pleasure or visual stimulation, but a journey for proving self-worth and resisting the omnipresent pressure from the hegemonic structure of sexual desirability.



## **Supporting, sustaining, connecting: how cultural festivals contribute to socio-cultural infrastructures**

*Bernadette Quinn*  
*Technological University Dublin*  
*Ireland*  
[bernadette.quinn@tudublin.ie](mailto:bernadette.quinn@tudublin.ie)

Many and frequent claims are made about the ability of festivals to build community (Curtis 2011, Howell 2013), foster social connectivity (Jepson, Stadler and Spencer (2019), build social capital (De Jong and Varley 2018), create social connections and inclusion (Pernecky and Lück 2013). However, overwhelmingly, such claims are supported by empirical evidence gathered in the social spaces created through the staging of a festival. The importance of such claims is not denied, however, it is argued that if we are to develop a full understanding of the socio-cultural value of festivals and of how they matter for the social sustainability of place, we need to acknowledge the manner in which festival production practices are interconnected with broader cultural and creative ecosystems beyond the festival moment (Hjalager 2009).

This paper aims to advance our understanding of iterative (Richards 2015) cultural festivals as more than moments of spectacle, viewing them as cultural activities that are embedded in both place and in wider socio-cultural practices. It follows the recent infrastructural turn in human geography (Bain and Podmore 2023, Layton and Latham 2022) and argues that festivals can be conceived of as social infrastructure that comprise distinct but entirely inter-connected components: material/built forms, socio-cultural materialities and immaterialities constructed through their year-round practices and, social spaces constructed and enhanced in the moment of their staging where materialities and immaterialities coalesce together.

This paper focuses on just a part of one of these components - the cultural materialities/immaterialities constructed through year-round festival practices. It presents empirical data gathered from 54 in-depth interviews with festival and cultural stakeholders in 4 largely rural areas in Ireland to identify both the cultural practices in which festivals engage year-round and the connections made in the process with other actors and institutions in the cultural/creative sector. Findings show festivals forging strong relationships with a diverse array of local, national and international actors and institutions as they get involved in such activities as education, archiving, broadcasting, co-producing, commissioning, as well as staging and performance. In the process, they create socio-cultural infrastructures that support and sustain cultural participation and production and the vitality of cultural life, not just in their host places but also further afield.

The study does not claim to be comprehensive but rather is an exploratory analysis of how festivals as creative practice link to, and have a sometimes catalytic relationship with, other cultural activities. There is overlap with the sizeable literature on festivals and social networks (Richards 2015, Jarman 2021) but here the emphasis is on the cultural as opposed to the social, although these are impossible to separate entirely.

## **Exploring Visitor Emotions and Enduring Involvement at Dark Tourism Sites Using Biometric Technologies**

*Martynas Radzevicius*  
*Kauno kolegija Higher Education Institution*  
*Lithuania*  
[martynas.radzevicius@go.kauko.lt](mailto:martynas.radzevicius@go.kauko.lt)

Dark tourism, which comprises visits to places mostly connected with death, has become a leading area of tourism research (Mora Forero et al., 2024; Light, 2017). The focus of this article is on how enduring involvement - the lasting connection of an individual to a certain place - shapes feelings of visitors to dark tourism destinations. It also assesses what biometric technologies could do for assessing these emotions while taking into account the community, spatial, and political aspects of the



experience. Research handles these issues seeking to achieve the furthering of dark tourism management evolution and provide ways for being more effective and ethical in practice. People visiting dark tourism sites are enthusiastic about their time there, and this is largely because of their desire for learning, natural curiosity, or intimate connections with events visitors commemorated (Lewis et al., 2022; Podoshen et al., 2018). Enduring involvement is the reason why their experience is so deep, hence alternative strategies, respecting the community's feelings and providing each audience with different package of interpretation, are necessary (Martini & Buda, 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). For instance, some memorial sites can be designed in a way that visitors will be deeply moved by them through the means of using personal narratives or designs important to their culture. Conventional approaches for the evaluation of visitor emotions as self-reports often lack reliability. Biometric technologies (facial expressions recognition, electrodermal activity, eye-tracking) offer objective information about visitors emotional reactions to the spatial and narrative elements of dark tourism sites (Ruiz-Lacaci et al., 2024; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015). The success of these technologies is why they are so widely used in understanding visitor behaviour and activating emotional engagement in tourism (Li et al., 2018). Incorporating biometric evaluations in conjunction with ongoing participation manifests an inventive basis for enhancing the experiences of visitors. By linking emotional reactions with spatial patterns and storytelling constructs, managers can recognize aspects activating deeper bonds and modify educational resources (Io & Wan, 2022; Nawijn et al., 2018). This methodology is also linked to the provision of ethical marketing strategies, while addressing issues related to political dynamics and community participation, bringing the aspect of sensitive issues high on the agenda for respectful engagement (Seaton et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2022). Ethical dilemmas constitute a vital area of specialization, especially on the topics of privacy, informed consent, and data security (Gretzel et al., 2020; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Transparency and protection of both visitors and local communities are critical to building trust and respect (Mkono, 2020). The ethical issues coming with these practices are ensured by using methodologies that respect the integrity of culture and society of dark tourism. This paper leads to the formulation of knowledge that provides an overview of visitors' exposure, emotional response, and sites' physical and social environment of dark tourism (Stone, 2018; Sharpley, 2020). The research discloses how inclusive, sensitive, and technology-focused practices can aid renewing the interpretation and management of dark tourism (Hartmann, 2022; Wassler & Schuckert, 2017).

## **Inclusive destinations – real accessibility beyond words**

*Zoltán Raffay*  
*University of Pécs*  
*Hungary*  
[raffayz@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:raffayz@ktk.pte.hu)

*Tibor Gonda*  
[gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu](mailto:gonda.tibor@ktk.pte.hu)

Despite the fact that the rights of disabled people, including the right to travel, have been declared as the same as those of their able-bodied counterparts in legislation for decades, as well as the prohibition of any discrimination (including discrimination on the grounds of disability), and that most advanced industrial societies now have most of the technical and organisational solutions to ensure that the quality and experience of travel for people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities is comparable to that of their able-bodied counterparts, the inclusion of people with disabilities in tourism is far from being complete, neither in Hungary nor in the leading countries of the world in the field of tourism. The involvement of this target group more intensively in tourism is not only a moral obligation for society and the tourism sector, but also a lucrative business opportunity, attracting a largely unserved market segment. There are several reasons why people with disabilities are proportionally less involved in tourism than their non-disabled counterparts (e.g. because of their typically more

restricted employment opportunities and, also in connection with this, their lower income levels, special infrastructure needs, etc.), and among these reasons there are a few that can be addressed and solved by the collaboration and joint efforts of the tourism sector. In addition to investments and adaptations to facilitate the use of attractions, tourist infrastructure and superstructures, and the development of soft tourism infrastructure (training and awareness-raising), it is vital that disabled travellers have access to reliable and up-to-date information on accommodation, restaurants and attractions, particularly on the level of their accessibility. In the framework of an Erasmus+ international project, 1,070 people with disabilities from 4 countries (Hungary, Poland, Croatia and Romania) were involved in the research to find out what factors make their travel difficult, what their specific needs are and what their specific consumption habits are during their travels. The study describes the habits, frequency and motivation of travel by people with disabilities, the barriers to travel and special needs. Identifying the real needs of the people concerned and understanding their consumption patterns is essential in order to define the main principles and practical steps for the development of accessible tourism and to make professionally substantiated recommendations.

### **The Readiness of Tourism and Creative Industry Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in adopting the Circular Economy Approach: A Case Study Bukit Dewi Manggung SMEs**

*Teges Ratna Ayu Ningrum*  
*Edinburgh Napier University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[T.Ningrum@napier.ac.uk](mailto:T.Ningrum@napier.ac.uk)

The purpose of this paper is to understand circular economy practices in traditional, family-owned tourism small and medium enterprises in West Java and Central Java, Indonesia. Circular economy is a concept of an economic system that substitutes the idea of 'end of life' with the reduction, as well as the reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials throughout the production, distribution, and consumption process (Kirchherr et al, 2017). CE is gaining momentum among tourism academics and practitioners as this concept emphasizes human well-being while eliminating waste, and protecting those natural resources that tourism relies on (Cabrera & Pino, 2021; Nocca et al, 2023; Jones & Wynn, 2022), Circularity offers promise on how businesses and the supply chain stakeholders may contribute to sustainable production and consumption (Manniche et al, 2021). Adopting this circular concept also benefits SMEs financially, both in terms of increased financial income and reduced purchase of raw materials. A study of SMEs in Europe indicates that adopting CE leads to economic advantages through savings on material costs, the development of competitive edges and the exploration of new markets (Dey et al, 2022).

Indonesia ranks among the largest economies in Southeast Asia as Indonesia MVA reach USD 281 billion while Thailand (USD 1,23 billion); Malaysia (USD 81,19 million) and Vietnam (USD 41,7 million) (Kemenperin, 2021). Currently, Indonesia is working to adopt the concept of a sustainable green economy, serving as a strategy for its economic transformation post-COVID-19 pandemic (Bappenas, 2022). Indonesia's commitment to the circular economy remains at the initial stage, with initial research conducted between 2020 and 2022 (Bappenas, 2024). Sustainable development is promoted through (i) the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which has been adopted and utilized as a guideline in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (ii) the Paris Agreement, ratified via Law Act 16 of 2016 related to the Paris Agreement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Bappenas, 2022).

Family companies are usually conservative, less open to new approaches and more leaning to traditional (low- and medium-tech) practices; the degree of R&D expenditure as a percentage of overall turnover remains low (Hauck & Prugl, 2015; Bertello et al, 2020; Spithoven et al, 2011). SMEs in the tourism sector are predominantly family firms that have motivations of their lifestyle to support their family and prevent disharmony (Getz & Carlsen, 2000), have minimal business expertise, lack financial resources and tend to free ride (Wanhill, 2002). Most SMEs in Indonesia run their operations with family involvement and it is mentioned in their regulations that one of the principles is kinship (Tedjakusuma, 2014; Wibawa & Yusnita, 2019). Given Indonesia's ambitious plans for circular

economy transition, this study synthesizes academic and grey literature on circular economy principles, barriers and motivators for SMEs in Indonesia to examine the readiness of traditional SMEs to adopt CE practices. Additionally, it considers the significance of traditional circularity practices for the adoption of broader CE policies in tourism to inform policy-making and contribute to the theoretical development of CE in tourism.

## **Tourism Destinations and Dementia-Friendly Communities: An Exploratory Study**

*Sandra Rebelo*  
*University of Lisbon*  
*Portugal*  
[sandra-rebelo1@hotmail.com](mailto:sandra-rebelo1@hotmail.com)

*Ana Gonçalves*  
*Miguel Padeiro*  
*Paulo Morgado*

The significant increase in dementia cases represents one of the greatest public health challenges at a global level. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) has called for urgent actions to mitigate this condition and its impacts.

This study aims to explore the relationship between tourism and dementia, identify best practices, and propose strategies for the development of dementia-friendly tourism destinations. Inclusive tourism plays a crucial role in promoting the mental and physical well-being of individuals with dementia. Innes et al. (2016) and Teri et al. (2008) highlight that inclusive tourism experiences enhance mood, stimulate physical and emotional activities, and encourage meaningful social interactions. These activities, which combine therapeutic landscapes and positive emotions, help mitigate the effects of dementia and complement non-pharmacological interventions (Li et al., 2023; Page et al., 2015; Wen et al., 2022).

A literature review was conducted, integrating academic sources and reports from international organizations such as Alzheimer Europe (2017), Alzheimer's Disease International, and Lin (2017), which highlight dementia-friendly community initiatives in over thirty countries. The methodology used was an exploratory analysis of public policies and inclusive practices in thirty-four countries, focusing on their application to tourism. The analyzed data included strategies from countries like the Netherlands, England, Denmark, Ireland, and Norway, recognized for their leadership in inclusive practices. These countries have implemented comprehensive programs that combine research, public policies, and community initiatives, promoting more inclusive environments. However, nations like Bosnia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania show little progress in this area (Alzheimer Europe, 2017; Alzheimer's Disease International, N.D.)

Although good inclusive practices were identified, not all are directly related to tourism. Lin (2017) emphasizes that the concept of dementia-friendly communities is still expanding, with a need for more research on the role of tourism in supporting individuals with dementia (Klimova, 2018; Zheng et al., 2023). The analysis revealed that dementia-friendly tourism destinations are still in their early stages, requiring structured and effective strategies.

Inspired by the principles of dementia-friendly communities, promoted by Crampton et al. (2012) and Alzheimer's Disease International (2016), this study proposes four key pillars for adapting tourism destinations: an adapted physical environment, community involvement, the provision of adequate services, and the creation of support networks. These approaches can reduce barriers like disorientation and social isolation, promoting safer and more inclusive environments (Page et al., 2015; Alzheimer's Society, 2013; Connell & Page, 2019).

The study concludes that dementia-friendly tourism is a strategic opportunity for social inclusion and sustainability. Inclusive destinations not only address a growing social need but also contribute to competitiveness, reduce seasonality, and align with social responsibility and sustainable development principles (VisitEngland, 2023). Additionally, such tourism promotes the improvement of the quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers (Bressan et al., 2022).

In conclusion, dementia-adapted tourism is not only a driver of inclusion and diversity but also an opportunity to generate social and economic value. To achieve this potential, it is crucial to invest in research that informs policies and initiatives, promoting accessible and competitive destinations while enriching the life experiences of individuals with dementia and their caregivers.

## **Exploring Tourists' Reflections on Interactions with Senior Residents at Destinations**

*Nafiseh Rezaei*  
*Hong Kong Metropolitan University*  
*Hong Kong SAR*  
[nrezaei@hkmu.edu.hk](mailto:nrezaei@hkmu.edu.hk)

The World Health Organization (2024) forecasts that by 2030, 16.7% of the global population will be aged 60 or older. This demographic, referred to as seniors or the elderly, is anticipated to grow from 1 billion in 2020 to 1.4 billion by 2030. Furthermore, by 2050, the number of seniors worldwide is projected to rise to 2.1 billion. Consequently, the expanding senior population is likely to play a more significant role in the tourism sector, given the increasing number of elderly individuals in various destinations.

Host-guest interactions are acknowledged as a key factor influencing customer experience (Lashley, 2008). Research by Styliadis (2022) examined the interactions between residents and tourists and their effect on tourists' perceptions of a destination. The study revealed that some residents act as destination ambassadors, indirectly shaping visitors' destination image and influencing their future behavioral intentions. Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016) discovered that local inhabitants significantly contribute to tourists' happiness and satisfaction, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat visits. Fan et al. (2017) noted that tourists are captivated by varying levels of communication with local residents. Cohen (1988) described local inhabitants as "cultural brokers," portraying them as live interpreters of local heritage and culture. According to Kastenholz et al. (2013), these roles can enhance tourists' experiences, reduce the transient nature of social interactions, and foster deeper immersion in local culture, thereby creating more meaningful experiences. This literature review underscores the significant and multifaceted role of local residents in shaping tourists' experiences. Numerous studies have examined host-tourist interactions from various angles, including destination image (Styliadis, 2022), destination competitiveness (Tse & Tung, 2022), sense of belonging (Su et al., 2024), emotional solidarity (Tan & Hsu, 2024), and power dynamics (Zhang & Xu, 2023). However, there remains a limited understanding of how tourists interpret their interactions with senior residents during their travels. This ongoing exploratory study aims to address this gap by analyzing tourists' online-generated content on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as travel websites like TripAdvisor. The focus will be on experiences in Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea, chosen because these Asian countries were among the top 50 countries with the highest percentages of older adults in 2020 (Population Reference Bureau, 2020). The researcher, an academic based at a university in Hong Kong, aims to maximize the practical implications of the study for the Asian region. Thematic content analysis will be utilized to explore tourists' interpretation of these interactions, potentially revealing insights into their perception, emotions, memorable experiences, motivation, satisfaction, revisit intention, learning outcomes, etc.

## **From the centre to the periphery: Developments in cultural tourism research**

*Greg Richards*

*ATLAS*

*Netherlands*

[richardstourism@gmail.com](mailto:richardstourism@gmail.com)

Cultural tourism is claimed to represent 40% of global tourism flows, and it is also a well-established field of academic research. In the past, however, a lot of research attention has been paid to cultural tourism in urban areas, particularly in major cities with high levels of tangible cultural heritage resources. The presence of iconic, must-see cultural sights has been the backbone of cultural tourism growth in recent decades, and many cities have tried to emulate the 'Bilbao Effect' of lancing blockbuster museums to attraction cultural visitors. The development of 'mass cultural tourism' (Richards, 2021) has however become problematic, as tourist crowds threaten to overwhelm fragile heritage sites and already-overcrowded historic city centres.

These problems have led policymakers to seek ways of tempting tourists away from crowded cities towards rural and remote areas (European Commission, 2025). Such a shift implies the development of cultural heritage resources in such areas, and involves considerable challenges in terms of funding, accessibility, technology and human resources. To assess these challenges and to chart a future research agenda for cultural tourism in rural and remote regions in Europe, a structured literature review was developed of over 700 sources in SCOPUS, Web of Science and Google Scholar. This aimed to identify major research themes, patterns of geographical coverage and gaps in the literature. Among the major findings of this review is a significant growth in research on intangible heritage, which is seen as an important resource for regions lacking major built attractions. This is linked to a growth in research on creative tourism, which is seen as a means of activating and valorizing intangible heritage resources, such as crafts, gastronomy and language. However, major research gaps were also identified, particularly in terms of specific cultural and creative tourism business models that can be used to stimulate innovation. There is also a notable lack of research on the governance structures and sustainability mechanisms necessary for implementing change in rural and remote areas.

The paper concludes with an assessment of fruitful future research avenues, and develops new place-based perspectives on cultural tourism research that can capture the unique dimensions of rural and remote areas.

## **More-than-human accessibility: Assistance dogs as tourists and workers**

*Jillian Rickly*

*University of Nottingham*

*United Kingdom*

[jillian.rickly@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jillian.rickly@nottingham.ac.uk)

This presentation explores the implications of recognizing assistance dogs as both tourists and workers when travelling as part of a human-assistance dog partnership. Assistance dogs have undergone extensive training with certified organizations to be able to carry out a range of tasks and actions that support people with disabilities and chronic medical conditions to achieve greater independence both within and outside of their home environments. This might include guiding a person with vision impairment around obstacles, alerting someone with epilepsy about an oncoming medical episode, or calming an autistic person with heightened anxiety. Thus, assistance dogs perform service work (Urbanik, 2012), as well as care, communication, emotion and body work (Coulter, 2016).

Animals in tourism contexts are associated with performative work, value-added work, and/or hidden labor (Rickly & Kline, 2021). Assistance dogs travelling with their human partner thus demonstrate value-added work, in that they enhance the tourism experience for the human. While this is a human-centric perspective on what constitutes work and labor, it is worthwhile to pursue this reasoning given



the extensive literature at the intersections of work and tourism. Conceptually, the literature recognizes business travel as travel undertaken in order to accomplish work-related activities, whereas digital nomadism encompasses working remotely in order to live a life of travel. In other words, whereas humans are readily accepted as both tourists and workers, this perspective has not yet been extended to assistance dogs.

In travelling with their human partner, assistance dogs leave their home environment, work during the journey and at the destination, but will also have opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation. Depending on which country they reside in, assistance dogs will be included in accessibility legislation to varying degrees, which influences the disabled person's right to have their assistance dog accompany them in shops, restaurants, visitor attractions, and so on. However, in crossing international borders for a holiday, they will likely encounter differing compliance standards and access rights. While such legal systems might be outside the comprehension of assistance dogs, the implications of disparate compliance codes, legal understanding and accepted levels of discrimination will have real consequences for destination accessibility for the human and the welfare of the assistance dog on holiday together.

This presentation will interrogate current understandings of tourism and work, highlighting the extent to which we can understand assistance dogs within existing conceptualizations. In doing so, the implications for human accessibility, assistance dog welfare, and the more-than-human relationality of the human-assistance dog partnership are explored.

## **System Dynamic Model of Tourism Platformisation Effects on Tourism Working Conditions**

*Blaž Rodič*  
*University of Maribor*  
*Slovenia*  
[blaz.rodic1@um.si](mailto:blaz.rodic1@um.si)

*Maja Turnšek*  
[maja.turnsek@um.si](mailto:maja.turnsek@um.si)

*Maja Breznik*  
*Jerneja Šavrič*

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of platformisation in tourism and its impacts for working conditions of tourism workers. We define platformisation in tourism as the proliferation of digital platforms in tourism operations, starting with distribution but later extending also to other areas of business operations (Turnšek & Radivojević, 2025). Specifically, we focus on three areas of platformisation in tourism for which there is accessible data for Slovenia and the EU 27 countries: (a) platformisation of accommodation distribution, (b) platformisation of tourism promotion, and (c) platformisation of working conditions.

This paper presents a causal influence diagram and System Dynamics (SD) model aimed at providing insight into the tourism labour market dynamics in Slovenia and EU 27 through the interplay of a set of variables representing the three areas of platformisation in tourism and variables representing working conditions. The model is based on previous research, consultation with domain experts and publicly available data from four different databases: indicators of platformisation are taken from the publicly accessible data on the Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe association (HOTREC) surveys on hotel distribution (every two years since 2013) (Schegg, 2024); Eurostat data on “collaborative economy platforms”, tourist visits in EU27, share of companies using social media for promotion, and experimental data on share of platform work in EU27. Indicators on working conditions in accommodation and food service labour market are taken from European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS). Finally, based on the work of (Díaz-Carrión et al., 2020), we use also indicators from OECD on social policy in EU27 countries, taking into account the differences in public spending on employment policies.



## **The Role of Visibility in Performances of Emotional Labor in Hospitality Spaces**

*Eleonora Rossi*  
*Dalarna / Örebro University*  
*Sweden*  
[ers@du.se](mailto:ers@du.se)

Hospitality spaces are characterized by a complex interplay of visible and invisible labour, where the performance of emotional labour is central to the customer experience. Current research often emphasizes the economic aspects of hospitality, but there is a need for deeper understanding of how spatial arrangements, power dynamics, and identity intersect with emotional labour and visibility to shape employee experiences. Specifically, there is a gap in understanding the micropolitics of everyday working lives within these spaces, and the implications for workers' well-being. This paper focuses on the role of visibility in performances of emotional labour in commercial hospitality spaces, specifically examining how these factors influence the articulation of identities, the performance of a hospitable body, and the production of affective atmospheres. The analysis explores the dynamics of 'front stage' and 'backstage' labour within the context of open layouts and spatial mobility.

This study draws on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with front-line employees working in the food and drink service industry, analyzed through thematic analysis. The methodological approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the lived experiences of front-line hospitality workers, using an intersectional lens to examine how factors such as gender, race, and age might influence the dynamics of visibility and emotional labour.

The findings highlight the significance of spatial arrangements, noting how open layouts and spatial mobility create complex dynamics of visibility and social interaction. The research reveals how the concept of the 'hospitable body' often dictates how workers are expected to perform emotions, creating a pressure to conform to company values and brand identity. Workers report that emotional labour is often invisible, yet crucial to the overall customer experience, highlighting the emotional demands of the work. Preliminary findings also point to the way that the performance of identities and the production of affective atmospheres in hospitality spaces become linked with the emotional labour of the staff.

The paper argues for a need to reiterate and highlight how hospitality spaces are not simply functional settings, but rather spaces of power negotiation where identities are constructed, maintained and sometimes challenged. By examining the complex relationship between visibility, emotional labour, and the performance of identity, the study contributes to a more complete understanding of the micropolitics of everyday working life in hospitality. The findings reiterate a need for management practices that are more aware of the emotional labour of employees and supportive of their well-being, rather than treating hospitality primarily as an economic exchange.

## **The European Capital of Culture as a Marketing Mega-Event: The Challenge of Getting Nominated**

*Wawrzyniec Rudolf*  
*University of Lodz*  
*Poland*  
[wawrzyniec.rudolf@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:wawrzyniec.rudolf@uni.lodz.pl)

*Elham Cheraghi*  
*Marta Olasik*

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative has evolved into a crucial cultural policy instrument for fostering urban development and improving the image of cities. This research examines the evolving nature of the selection criteria for the ECoC program and the characteristics of the cities chosen over three timeframes: 1985–2004, 2005–2019, and 2020–2033. It highlights the broader changes in European cultural policy and urban governance during times of transition in tourism hotspots.

A case study approach evaluated 77 cities awarded the ECoC title. Important factors considered were the size of the city, its administrative status, and any UNESCO designations. The results indicate a trend shift towards choosing smaller cities, with a focus on intangible heritage and creative urban strategies, indicating a move away from the previous preference for larger, historically significant cities.

During the years 1985 to 2004, major urban hubs like Athens and Berlin, known for their substantial cultural resources, were preferred. Between 2005 and 2019, the focus shifted to regional capitals and smaller towns, with Pécs and Umeå serving as notable examples. The ongoing phase (2020–2033) prioritizes inclusivity and diversity, with small and medium-sized cities such as Elefsina and Bad Ischl conforming to new selection standards that highlight long-term planning, community involvement, and cultural innovation. Visual studies, including maps, depict the geographic spread of ECoC host cities throughout different periods, showcasing spatial trends and a growing diversity in city characteristics. In a period of change, where tourist spots encounter spatial, community, and governance issues, the ECoC program promotes enduring cultural and economic progress. This matches the conference theme: "Destination transformation: towards new economic, social, and environmental paths." The program shows how cultural endeavors can drive extensive urban transformation, merging creative cultural methods with sustainability objectives. Additionally, the ECoC brand boosts a city's standing, strengthening its identity both regionally and globally.

The research highlights the ECoC's function in redefining cities within the European cultural and economic sphere. It acts as both a catalyst for regional growth and a competitive asset in place marketing, boosting international exposure and promoting socio-economic advantages. By connecting historical traditions with forward-looking strategies, the ECoC offers a complete framework for urban development. Nonetheless, limitations like the lack of qualitative feedback from city marketers indicate opportunities for further investigation, particularly regarding the lasting effects of ECoC projects on local communities and economic systems.

This study provides a guide for city policymakers and cultural strategists, focusing on customized cultural initiatives and involving stakeholders. It adds to the conversation on using cultural mega-events as instruments for urban change, connecting policy goals with tangible results. By employing strategic planning and international cooperation, cities can utilize the potential of ECoC to promote inclusive growth and boost their cultural and economic standings. The study emphasizes the changing function of the ECoC in advancing European cultural diversity and enhancing urban innovation.

## Discourses and positionings around degrowth among European destination stakeholders

*Antonio Russo*  
*Rovira i Virgili University*  
*Spain*  
[antonio.russo@urv.cat](mailto:antonio.russo@urv.cat)

*Ana Pastor Alcaraz*  
[ana.pastor@urv.cat](mailto:ana.pastor@urv.cat)

*Andrea Ganzaroli*

This contribution seeks to examine areas of convergence and divergence among key stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem of various European urban destinations, identifying nuanced perspectives that indicate the feasibility and acceptance of advancing a genuine degrowth agenda by the involved agents. While degrowth in global tourist mobility presents a significant challenge in tackling the climate crisis, destination-level research increasingly highlights its potential as a systemic response to overtourism and its social impacts, particularly social exclusion rooted in residential instability and precarious work. This reflects a broader neglect of the social consequences of tourism development in developed economies (Romão & Neuts, 2017). When combined with socio-political challenges and shifts in production and consumer demand, this neglect contributes to a wider polycrisis affecting the tourism sector (Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020).

Local degrowth agendas should look for simultaneously alleviating the main sources of pressure on the 'city of residence' while transitioning towards a new competitive regime standing on greater value offered to visitors and indirectly better employment conditions – shortly, allowing companies to do 'more with less' and ensuring the residential affordability of their workers. However, the question remains: how prepared are local tourism systems to adapt to this change, especially when faced with external pressures? Compounding this challenge is the frequent exclusion of social agents with vested interests in tourist spaces and urban economies from critical decision-making processes (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

The SMARTDEST project has placed these questions at the core of its collaborative work through CityLabs, participatory forums that addressed key issues of social exclusion stemming from tourism growth in seven European destinations. These forums aimed to identify and confirm the main drivers and mechanisms of exclusion as highlighted by local social, political, and economic stakeholders. They also explored policy and innovation strategies as potential pathways toward more equitable and inclusive urban environments for stable communities, while examining the tangible impacts of smart solutions at the local level (Buonincontri & Micera, 2016).

The materials drawn from such collaborative work, in interviews and focus groups, have been collected and analysed to assess the level of conformity within the participating stakeholders on different policy options suggesting degrowth or stricter regulations on the expansion of tourist supply, both transversally to the various cases and concerning specific issues detected locally. This analysis employs discourse and sentiment analysis through an innovative methodology based on BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) (Ansar et al., 2021). This approach enables real-time tracking and organization of a significant number of stakeholders' opinions, identifying opportunities for collaboration by aligning opinions and activities as a shared understanding measure. By mapping the feasibility of various pathways, this methodology highlights the types of alliances and levels of conformity among destinations, providing a foundation for actionable and collaborative strategies.

## Digitalization in Cultural Heritage Destinations in Times of War: A Tourism Revival Plan

*Hanine El Sahili*

*Lebanese University / Universidad Rovira i Virgili*

*Lebanon - Spain*

[hanine.elsahili@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:hanine.elsahili@estudiants.urv.cat)

The tourism industry is fast paced, it is a place where every day holds a new trend, and a different opportunity. And as a result of its unpredictable nature, it becomes vital to different tourism stakeholders to stay up to date, and look out for any opportunity that arises, therefore keeping themselves in competition, hence to deliver an exceptional experience for tourists who are at the other end of the equation. And, day after day, the world is rapidly shifting towards a digitalized lifestyle, specifically, the cultural heritage sector which witnessed a huge wave of digitalization over the last decade, introducing into the field new trends in heritage sites' management, bringing into the picture novel experiences for tourists, a shift in the best way to better learn about one's history and culture, and contributing to the tourism development in destinations. These contemporary trends are very potent, and hold a critical value in destinations' management, given that they are linked with the factors of stability and certainty. This is why, in times of war, the management of cultural heritage sites becomes dependent on the stability of the situation, whether using traditional or digital styles, and this highly impacts the perception of tourists of these destinations in such times, and the possibility of developing the tourism sector in the said destination becomes a very hard process to work on. This research article, aims to understand the impact of war on the cultural heritage destinations, and how digitalization in management can affect the tourism revival process in impacted destinations, as a part of a long term tourism development strategy.

## Intangible cultural heritage and climate change: Adaptation measures for Human Tower exhibitions in tourist destinations

*Òscar Saladié*

*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*

*Spain*

[oscar.saladie@urv.cat](mailto:oscar.saladie@urv.cat)

*Júlia Sevil*

*Jon Xavier Olano Pozo*

*Anna Boqué-Ciurana*

One consequence of climate change is the increase in days with adverse weather conditions for outdoor activities, particularly in the summer. This includes human towers, an activity declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. As a result, the likelihood of adverse weather conditions coinciding with a human tower exhibition (diada castellera) is increasing. The objectives of this research are as follows: (i) determine the extent to which weather can impact the activity; (ii) identify the most favourable/adverse weather conditions for human tower exhibitions; (iii) establish the optimal temperature range for human tower exhibitions; and (iv) analyse adaptation measures in response to climate change. In May 2024, workshops were held with three human tower teams, involving 36 castellers: Colla Jove Xiquets de Tarragona (8), Xiquets de Tarragona (18) and Castellers d'Altafulla (10). Participants completed a questionnaire individually assessing the impact of weather and nine other variables on the exhibition's success using a five-point Likert scale. They then discussed and agreed on the most favourable/adverse weather conditions, determined the optimal temperature range and established the maximum temperature at which the activity should not be carried out. Finally, they proposed adaptation measures based on priority and feasibility. The results showed that 19.4% of the participants indicated that weather had a very high impact on human tower exhibitions, a much lower percentage compared to training (91.7%) and psychological conditions of

castellers (50%). The most favourable weather conditions for human tower exhibitions were identified as mild temperature, moderate humidity, light breeze or calm winds, with some cloudiness in summer and no rain. The optimal temperature range was determined to be 20-26.5°C, with participants noting that thermal comfort depends on relative humidity. The maximum temperature for exhibitions was set at 34°C. Participants identified five main categories of adaptation measures: exhibition timing, location and duration; and castellers outfit and hydration/nutrition. Providing cold water and limiting exhibition duration were considered high priority and feasible measures, while changing the timing or locations was seen as less feasible. Improving the shirt worn by castellers (breathable, durable and non-slip) was deemed a priority but less feasible measure. Castellers must discuss which adaptation measures need to be developed and implemented. The primary focus should be on prioritizing the safety of the participants, while also safeguarding the rich cultural heritage and identity that the castells represent, especially in the case of exhibitions performed in tourist destinations such as Costa Daurada. This objective can only be accomplished through the collaboration of the castellers, the exhibition organizers and the public authorities.

## **The role of narrative in the social construction processes and interpretation of World Heritage Sites**

*Maria Carla Saliu*  
*University of Cagliari*  
*Italy*  
[mariacarla.saliu@unica.it](mailto:mariacarla.saliu@unica.it)

*Ivan Blečić*

*Salvador Anton Clavé*  
[salvador.anton@urv.cat](mailto:salvador.anton@urv.cat)

The study examines how, during the nomination processes of cultural heritage for the World Heritage List, the value of heritage itself is constructed and validated by a narrative which is the proof of its Outstanding Universal Value.

According to Brumann (2014), the study embraces an “agnostic approach” to heritage which rejects the idea that value is intrinsic and a priori but considers the possibility that its very materiality constrains its interpretation and social use. Heritage is knowledge, a cultural product and a political resource, and its identification in specific social and intellectual circumstances is contextual, as are the meanings attributed to it (Graham et al., 2010). Based on these assumptions and on the diversity of cultural Sites on the World Heritage List which indicates how the definition of value of heritage in that context has changed and is changing over time (Titchen, 1995), the aim of the study is to show how that value is constructed during the candidacy processes within a system of formalised practices (Turtinen, 2000).

In doing this, the study presents (1) foundational concepts described in UNESCO’s constitutive documents, such as authenticity, integrity and Outstanding Universal Value; and (2) the data collected from qualitative interviews with the promoters of an ongoing candidacy process to the World Heritage List. Therefore, the reconstruction of the candidacy process of an ongoing case study is presented. This reconstruction (1) follows the steps and standards set out by UNESCO, and (2) adopts an approach that encompasses a dialogue among restoration theories developed by Cesari Brandi (1963) and key concepts related to the storytelling practices used for the design of content-oriented visitor attractions in the context of tourism destinations.

The reconstruction presented points out how the value of World Heritage can be read as a social construction process.

The paper’s contribution is rooted in its interdisciplinary approach to the subject of cultural heritage, whereby the candidature process and the definition of the value are represented as a new social path that enables the creation of meaning and the making of meaningful value in the UNESCO context.



## **Framing ethics and identity in dark tourism and volunteer tourism: A social media perspective**

*Marta Salvador-Almela*  
*CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy*  
*Spain*  
[marta.salvador@cett.cat](mailto:marta.salvador@cett.cat)

*Craig Wight*

The rise of social media platforms and the digitalisation of photography have significantly strengthened the relationship between tourism experiences and visual communication. This shift is reflected in the growing importance and utilisation of user-generated images (Lo et al., 2011) and online photo-sharing practices (Haslebach et al., 2019). Visual depictions derived from user-generated content are instrumental in influencing how a destination, tourism attraction, or experience is perceived (Lobinger & Mele, 2022). However, there is limited research on how social media imagery affects tourist behaviour and expectations in niche forms of tourism, particularly in areas associated with poverty, conflict, and tragedy (Kılıç et al., 2024; Wight & Stanley, 2022). Addressing this gap, the present research explores how social media shapes and disseminates narratives within dark tourism and volunteer tourism at destinations marked by complex and sensitive contexts.

This paper highlights key elements in narrative approaches between volunteer and dark tourism, specifically focusing on the ethical and performative dimensions of content shared. In volunteer tourism, social media largely promotes positive self-representation, aligning tourists with “helper” identities, yet often overlooks the deeper neo-colonial complexities inherent in these experiences. (Salvador-Almela, 2023). In contrast, dark tourism’s online discourse tends to reflect a more critical, sometimes contentious stance toward tourists’ interactions with sites associated with tragedy or death, where ethical debates over commodification and tourists’ behaviours are prevalent (Wight, 2020; Wight & Lennon, 2007).

Similarities arise in the portrayal of tourists as protagonists of these narratives, with social media reinforcing a pattern of performative behaviours, such as capturing ‘selfies’ with local children in volunteer tourism or at memorial sites in dark tourism where moral panic is often the outcome. In both contexts, user-generated content serves to legitimise and spread these specific representations, illustrating how social media not only shapes tourists’ actions but also perpetuates broader narratives of power, identity, and ethical engagement with sensitive sites.

This research aims to unpack these divergences and convergences within volunteer tourism and dark tourism, arguing that social media provides a powerful lens through which to analyse the ethical and moral dynamics in these tourism forms. Through this dual examination, we contribute to a nuanced understanding of the ways in which these types of tourism navigate complex ethical terrain in a digital age, informing both future research and practical engagement strategies within these fields.

## **Tourism's Unequal Footprint: Geospatial Insights into Tourism and Local Wealth**

*Nichapat Sangkaew*  
*Prince of Songkla, Phuket campus*  
*Thailand*  
[nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th)

*Chayanon Phucharoen*  
*Aziz Nanthamornphong*

This study critically examines the spatial economic impact of tourism on community wealth distribution in Thailand, challenging the widely held assumption that tourism inherently fosters inclusive economic growth. While national-level analyses offer broad economic perspectives, they often obscure localized disparities, whereas micro-level studies remain too context-specific for broader applicability. To bridge



this gap, we apply advanced geospatial analysis to explore the correlations between tourist attractions, accommodations, and community wealth across Thailand's diverse economic landscape. Guided by Tobler's First Law of Geography, this study integrates User-Generated Content from Google Maps and the Relative Wealth Index (RWI), analyzing 66,659 grid units (each 2.4 km<sup>2</sup>). The findings reveal stark inequalities: while tourism density is often assumed to drive local wealth, only 5% of areas demonstrate a direct correlation between accommodation density and community prosperity. Attractions alone do not directly enhance community wealth but exert indirect economic influence by increasing accommodation density in select clusters. However, 96% of grids exhibit no significant link between tourism activity and wealth distribution, underscoring tourism's limited capacity to deliver widespread economic benefits.

These results directly contribute to the degrowth in tourism discourse by challenging the assumption that tourism-driven economic expansion equates to equitable development. Rather than fostering broad-based prosperity, tourism growth in Thailand remains spatially concentrated, disproportionately benefiting a small number of destinations such as Bangkok, Phuket, and Surat Thani, while leaving most communities economically marginalized. This aligns with degrowth critiques of neoliberal tourism models, which often prioritize profitability and expansion over community well-being.

The findings underscore an urgent need for alternative, localized tourism strategies. We propose community-based tourism (CBT), spatially targeted infrastructure investments, and fiscal incentives for tourism development in underserved areas as pathways to a more just and sustainable tourism economy. By incorporating a degrowth lens, this research argues for a shift away from mass tourism-driven economic paradigms toward more equitable, small-scale, and community-led tourism initiatives. Employing innovative geospatial methodologies, this study advances the discourse on sustainable tourism development, offering critical insights for policymakers, urban planners, and tourism stakeholders. It calls for a re-evaluation of tourism's economic contributions, emphasizing that achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) requires redistributing, rather than expanding, tourism's benefits. By integrating the complexities of tourism economics with degrowth principles, this research provides a data-driven framework for rethinking tourism policies in ways that prioritize social equity over perpetual growth.

## **Agency and coevolutionary path development in tourism destinations. Lessons from Mexico**

*Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[cinta.sanzi@urv.cat](mailto:cinta.sanzi@urv.cat)

*Carlos Gauna*  
*Salvador Anton Clavé*  
*Alfonso Zepeda Arce*

Drawing on recent debates in Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG), this study relies on path development and coevolution theories to gain deep understanding of tourism destination trajectories over time. This framework allows, on the one hand, to implement a long-term perspective which goes beyond the analysis of isolated episodes of transformation and single development pathway perspectives, putting particular attention to the role of agency across path transformation and interrelations. On the other hand, it also highlights the complexity of tourism destinations and their development paths, focusing on the reciprocal causal relationships between actors, industries, institutions, and development paths, while underscoring the socio-economic, environmental, and technical elements coevolving at various spatial scales.

Empirical evidence derives from exploring the evolution of the Southern Coast of Jalisco region in Mexico as a tourism destination from the 1930s to the present, which offers 193 hotels, with 4,284 bed places, and hosts over 750,000 tourists annually in registered accommodation. With a population of about 100,000, this coastal area covers a surface of 750 square kilometers and is located south to the second most populated area in the states of Jalisco and Nayarit and one of Mexico's major sun and

beach destinations: Puerto Vallarta. Employing a qualitative methodology that includes semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and documentary analysis, findings obtained reveal the coevolution of distinctive tourism paths within the region and the interrelations between these paths, including positive synergies and actual conflicts with other productive, social and environmental dimensions of the place and structural conditions at various scales.

Overall, this study enhances understanding of tourism destination evolution from a Global South perspective, a region with limited academic exploration of its unique tourism development processes. These include the impact of reproductive agency in coevolving path development and the key role of non-local actors – i.e. national government and individual foreign investors – in emerging countries or economies. The study, hence, illustrates how applying coevolutionary theories tackling the role of agency in destination path shaping research, can enhance our understanding of the multifaceted and complex evolution of tourism places. These insights are invaluable for policymakers aiming to foster resilient, adaptive, and inclusive regional development strategies.

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## **Restaurant Revenue Management Practices in Johannesburg, South Africa**

*Erica Sao Joao*  
*University of Johannesburg*  
*South Africa*  
[ericasj@uj.ac.za](mailto:ericasj@uj.ac.za)

*Dikeledi Comfort Ngwetjana*

Revenue management (RM) developed out of the strategies of yield management which were first used in the airline industry decades ago. Since then, revenue management has gained recognition within the hospitality industry as a means of adapting management models into more sustainable businesses, analysing all operational areas within the hotels. Globally in the restaurant industry, the concept of RM is slowly becoming more evident as some of the restaurants have been exposed to how these strategies can assist to make them more profitable and therefore resilient. This exploratory study aimed to investigate the use and effects of RM in restaurants within Johannesburg, to determine the RM approaches and strategies used to ensure financial sustainability. This study utilised an exploratory qualitative methodology, with purposive-convenience techniques of non-probability sampling and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Interviews were then transcribed, coded, and themes identified. The findings indicate that restaurant managers lack knowledge and understanding of RM. However, some of the RM strategies are practiced regardless. Restaurant managers are trying to minimize the costs while maintaining the quality of the products. The struggle for financial sustainability in restaurants is because of the reluctance and slow return of customers, changes in economic status, ever-increasing expenses, then additional costs incurred to be operational like buying generators and their fuel. A way of increasing the restaurant's revenue is through the review of the menu in terms of dynamic pricing, menu engineering, customer relationship management, RevPASH, and restaurant reservation strategies are possible revenue management strategies that can be used in the restaurant industry.

## **Cross-Border Collaboration for Circular Tourism Economy: A Critical Review of the Mediterranean**

*Angelo Sciacca*

*Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI)*

*France*

[angelo.sciacca@iddri.org](mailto:angelo.sciacca@iddri.org)

*Constantia Anastasiadou*

*Edinburgh Napier University*

*United Kingdom*

[c.anastasiadou@napier.ac.uk](mailto:c.anastasiadou@napier.ac.uk)

The transition to a circular economy (CE) is gaining popularity as a key strategy for sustainable development, necessitating systemic shifts in how resources are managed, reused, and regenerated (Suárez-Eiroa et al., 2019). Achieving a CE transition is particularly challenging in tourism, where value chains, resource flows (Sciacca, 2023), and social and environmental impacts can extend across multiple jurisdictions and localities. Tourism's complex policy landscape may lead to regional regulatory fragmentation and incoherences that may hinder the sector's ability to fully embrace circularity (Becchetti et al., 2025; Popowska & Lechman, 2025). Given these complexities, cross-border collaboration can be a critical enabler of more integrated and effective CE strategies. While research increasingly explores the CE in tourism (e.g., Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022), the role of cross-border collaboration in supporting this transition remains underexamined yet essential. Recent studies, such as Cramer (2022), highlight the need for strong government leadership, stakeholder engagement, and network governance to enable the CE, while others have called for CE integration across all policy levels (Council of Europe, 2024). Additionally, the OECD (2024) explicitly advocates for multi-level and cross-border governance arrangements to support resilient cross-border developments, while Wong Villaneuva et al., (2020) emphasise that cross-border governance will foster territorial integration and reduce inequalities between regions. However, existing studies on CE governance often focus on broader or non-tourism sectoral perspectives that do not include cross-border governance arrangements for CE (c.f.. Schultz et al. (2024), who examined how stakeholder collaboration drives the systemic transition to a CE in the European chemical and plastic industry or Wu et al. (2024) who studied how platform governance can enhance waste management in the construction and demolition industry). Understanding how cross-border governance mechanisms influence the adoption of circular transition in the tourism sector can be significant in efforts to become more sustainable. This study aims to address this gap through secondary data analysis, drawing from both academic and grey literature to identify key enablers and barriers to cross-border collaboration for a CE in tourism. The study adopts an analytical framework informed by multi-level governance theory (Bachet, et al., 2016) and network governance approaches (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012) to evaluate the determinants of effective cross-border collaboration for a CE. The study will produce a mapping of enabling and inhibiting factors, processes, and issues, for effective cross-border governance for a circular tourism economy. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study provides a structured approach to identify governance mechanisms and systems that enhance cross-border circularity in tourism to inform policy making and expand the theoretical development of this field.

## **Contested authenticity: navigating local identity, tourism, and heritage in Edinburgh**

*Matea Senkic*  
*University of Edinburgh*  
*United Kingdom*  
[matea.senkic@ed.ac.uk](mailto:matea.senkic@ed.ac.uk)

As home to key government institutions, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and world-renowned festivals, Edinburgh – a city with a population of just half a million – must constantly balance its role as both a city for locals and a national, cosmopolitan capital. In recent years, the challenge of maintaining this balance has led to growing tensions between tourism industry leaders and developers on one side, and heritage and local activist groups on the other over what “authentic Edinburgh” represents or should represent. As such, authenticity has become not just a backdrop to these discussions but a tool for shaping and communicating ideas about the city. While much of the existing research on overtourism and touristification focuses on the material impacts of tourism such as displacement of residents from the city centres, this study takes a different approach by placing authenticity at the centre of analysis. It explores how authenticity is strategically mobilized by different stakeholders in their efforts to influence urban development, heritage preservation, and tourism policy. By examining Edinburgh's local news media, annual reports, and policy documents produced by city officials, tourism organizations, and heritage and activist groups, this presentation explores the discursive battles over authenticity. It investigates how different actors frame and contest the meaning of authenticity, how these narratives shape public perception, and how they ultimately influence policy decisions. This research not only deepens our understanding of authenticity's role in urban conflicts but also highlights the power of narrative framing in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions.

## **Festivals and Legacies of the Sea: SDG development in Sainte Luce, Madagascar**

*Jonathan Skinner*  
*University of Surrey*  
*United Kingdom*  
[jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.skinner@surrey.ac.uk)

A festival, whether international, national or local, represents the ideal knowledge-sharing and capacity-building platform within and between communities. It is where heritage can be realised, developed, and celebrated. This paper presents results of a Rising from the Depths Network innovation grant to develop a ‘festival of the sea’ in the Sainte Luce conservation zone, Madagascar. The festival developed UN SDG goals, and raised the profile of sustainable conservation work in the region with NGO ‘SEED Madagascar’ through the promotion and celebration of best practice lobster fisheries management. The music, dance, arts and crafts festival was delivered from the ground-up as an empowering and creative response to community-identified issues surrounding food security and tensions between traditional and modern lobster fishery management. The project rested upon indigenous maritime cultural heritage practices and extended conceptualisations of heritage to include living marine cultural heritage as a tool for adaptive resilience in the face of adversity. The project involved partnering the University of Roehampton with local NGO SEED Madagascar, engaging local communities with ethnographic and practice-based arts linked with and showcased through a Festival of the Sea. The co-production of knowledge and skills sharing between artists from the UK and Madagascar was a specific feature of this project, as was the augmentation of local and provincial environmental governance institutions. The festival climax was a carnival parade through the villages to the sea. This presentation will include some of the difficulties and complexities of mounting a modern collaborative project in a traditional location.

## **Anticipating regenerative tourism futures: A process-based systems approach to tourism transition in the Westhoek (Flanders, Belgium)**

*Eva De Smedt*

*IDEA Consult*

*Belgium*

[eva.desmedt@ideaconsult.be](mailto:eva.desmedt@ideaconsult.be)

*Justine Bauters*

In an era of complex global challenges, such as urbanisation, climate change, rapid technological advancements, social fragmentation and geopolitical tensions, tourism destinations are increasingly experimenting with moving beyond traditional governance models towards more adaptive, anticipatory and systemically-informed strategies (Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2020; Sharma & Tham, 2023). This paper presents a methodological case study on the co-creation of a regenerative tourism strategy for the Westhoek, a region in West Flanders (Belgium). Grounded in Futures Studies, our approach introduces an innovative systems thinking framework that foregrounds collective anticipation, rigorous futures imagination and stakeholder inclusivity as key elements in guiding place-based transitions.

The study tackles two central research questions: (1) How can futures studies methodologies facilitate the complex transition to regenerative tourism in destination systems?; and (2) What are critical enablers and barriers to building non-extractive collective imagination and collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups, including hard-to-reach local communities?

The methodological framework is structured around a sequential process of five cumulative workshops involving tourism professionals and local residents, including youth and entrepreneurs in the region (Westhoek). This 'futures carousel' approach set off with a comprehensive situational analysis to establish a shared understanding of the destination's current state and DNA. The situational analysis formed the basis for the workshop series that subsequently and iteratively built upon each other. Hence, the output of each session formed the direct input for each next session. The workshops subsequently foregrounded different steps in the collective anticipation process: (1) mapping current opportunities and obstacles; (2) generating preferable scenarios; (3) deepening scenarios from a multi-stakeholder perspective; (4) exploring system innovations; and (5) co-constructing adaptive pathways through backcasting. The accumulated outputs of this series of futures workshops will – in close collaboration with the local tourism department – eventually be translated into actionable strategies for the future of tourism in the region's policy plan for 2026-2032.

Preliminary findings reveal the transformative potential of futures studies methodologies in regenerating tourism systems. Workshop participants not only identified preferable futures for the region, but also surfaced systemic challenges, such as limited mobility options in the region, fragmented governance structures, decreasing liveability in areas with increased tourist intensity, and weak engagement with local residents, particularly youth. These insights emphasise the significance of rigorous imagination, systems thinking, stakeholder agency and dynamic feedback loops to work towards bottom-up and long-term visioning and tourism strategy formation.

The paper advances the field of tourism systems thinking by presenting a replicable, process-based research framework that can function as a compass for navigating transitions in tourism destinations. It highlights the potential of participatory foresight as a potential tool for systemic change. By using futures studies methodologies to address uncertainties and complexities related (but not limited to) to tourism, the study shows how collective anticipation and imagination can serve as drivers for adaptive and transformative tourism futures.



## **The role of city parks in creating wellbeing-related liveability**

*Melanie Smith*  
Budapest Business University  
Hungary  
[smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu](mailto:smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu)

*Joanna Kowalczyk-Anioł*  
[joanna.kowalczyk@geo.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:joanna.kowalczyk@geo.uni.lodz.pl)

From the 19th century onwards, European urban city parks aimed to contribute to improving health conditions for city residents (Grochowski, 2023), increasingly playing an important role in the creation of accessible public recreational spaces. By the 21st century, they became part of urban development strategies as desirable components for sustainable and liveable cities (Bernacki, 2009; Mouratidis, 2021). In their Urban Liveability Index, Higgs et al. (2019) include recreational facilities and green space access, linking such indicators to health and wellbeing outcomes. Several studies have emphasised the wellbeing functions of city parks (e.g. Taylor et al., 2020; Jabbar et al., 2021; van Dinter et al., 2022). The positive effect of urban greening on urban liveability include improvements in the natural environment, creating an activity space for residents and enhancing the image of the city (Kang et al., 2022). It has been suggested that city parks play an important role in residents' wellbeing and could provide the foundation for sustainable city tourism (Smith, Pinke-Sziva & Puczkó, 2024). Although it is recommended that cities should expand urban green spaces to provide recreational spaces for residents and tourists alike (Zhang and Ren, 2024), care must be taken over competition for such spaces, especially in the context of overtourism (Neuts and Vanneste, 2020).

This study focuses on Central and Eastern European cities where the availability and quality of green spaces has typically been lower than in Western European cities (Kabisch et al. 2016; Biernacka et al., 2020). The study examines the role of city parks in creating wellbeing-related benefits for users. The primary research focuses on a case study of Piłsudski Park, the largest city park in Łódź, Poland and presents the results of a questionnaire-based survey of 238 park users. The data reveals patterns of park use, motivations for visitation, and perceived well-being benefits. The findings show that although passive recreation prevails, the primary motivation for park visits are related to physical wellbeing, e.g. walking. However, mental wellbeing benefits like relaxation and stress-reduction are also highly valued. While rated lower overall, social wellbeing benefits like social interaction are more important for younger and older users, as well as those who are more marginalized (e.g. unemployed). The data also shows the relationship between proximity and frequency of visits in amplifying wellbeing benefits.

Overall, the data helps to understand city park user patterns, motivations and benefits of usage. Such findings can have important implications for city park management by understanding the different needs of mixed user groups, including tourists. The relationship between passive and active usage can be useful when determining how to develop city park activities further. Identifying conflicts between user groups (e.g. residents and tourists) could also be the focus of future studies if it is deemed necessary in cities suffering from overtourism.

## **The role of leisure, culture and tourism in smart living**

*Melanie Smith*  
Budapest Business University  
Hungary  
[smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu](mailto:smith.melanie@uni-bge.hu)

*Songling Chang*

This study investigates the relationship between smart living, tourism and resident quality of life (QoL). The study combines a comprehensive literature review of 'smart cities' and 'quality of life' (2020-2023)



with empirical research based on resident questionnaires designed to capture key indicators of QoL and smart living. Smart living has been defined as one of the most important domains of smart cities and is often considered to be synonymous with QoL. The relationship between smart living and liveability is also explored, as many of the indicators that have been used to measure smart living are similar to those used in liveability studies (e.g. housing, healthcare, education, transport, recreation). The key difference is that smart living also includes the role of technology-based services and tools in enhancing QoL.

The research addresses several critical gaps in current smart city literature. While much attention has been paid to technological and infrastructural aspects of smart cities, less focus has been given to residents' lived experiences and perceptions of QoL (smart living). Additionally, existing research has predominantly researched objective or 'hard' indicators, leaving room for an analysis of subjective or 'soft' measurements that better reflect residents' experiences and priorities. Many studies have focused on some of the key domains of smart living like health, security, housing and social cohesion, but relatively few have dealt specifically with leisure, culture and tourism dimensions.

The investigation was conducted in Budapest, Hungary, offering insights into the unique context of a post-socialist city in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The study has three primary objectives. Firstly, it explores the relationship between smart living, quality of life and liveability, identifying the indicators that have been used to measure these domains in previous studies. This forms the basis of a questionnaire that was distributed to a representative sample of residents in 2024 resulting in 453 responses. Secondly, it explores how residents experience various aspects of urban life, including leisure, culture and tourism, as well as transport. Finally, it seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for urban researchers and policy-makers, advocating for a more balanced approach that combines top-down smart city initiatives with bottom-up understanding of resident priorities. Overall findings reveal that respondents are least happy with housing quality and costs, followed by healthcare and low salaries compared to the cost of living. They also do not see Budapest as a very clean city. Respondents find public transport efficient and easy to use, and they tend to use electronic tickets. However, they are not so happy with the parking situation and overall traffic management. Respondents generally have a positive image of Budapest, they find the city relatively safe, feel a sense of community and find the people relatively open and friendly. They are really positive about cultural and tourist attractions, as well as sports facilities. 60% of respondents are satisfied with the city's green space provision. They seem relatively unaffected by tourism or are positive about the impacts of tourism, but closer analysis reveals that it depends on the district of the city that they are living in. In the central districts of the city, residents are happier with the cultural provision and tourist attractions, but they are less happy about the impacts of tourism. In terms of smart tools and services, they are particularly interested in tools relating to transport, parking and ticketing – including for cultural attractions. However, (perhaps surprisingly), they are least interested in digital experiences in cultural facilities.

## **The economic implications of eudaimonic tourism experiences**

*Daniela Soldić Frleta*  
*University of Rijeka*  
*Croatia*  
[danielas@fthm.hr](mailto:danielas@fthm.hr)

*Jelena Đurkin Badurina*  
[jelenad@fthm.hr](mailto:jelenad@fthm.hr)

Eudaimonic tourism experiences refer to authentic, deep and meaningful destination experiences. By enabling such experiences, destinations can attract more guests and position itself as a quality and unique destination, resulting in increased tourist attraction, longer tourist stays and higher tourism revenues. The purpose of this study is to determine how tourists who encountered highly eudaimonic experiences at the destination contribute to the economic benefits of the area during their stay. For that purpose, onsite survey was conducted from July to December 2024 on the island of Rab

(Croatia). A total of 196 respondents (tourists who spend on the island at least one night) completed the survey and 192 of them were included in the analysis. A questionnaire was constructed using items from previous studies on eudaimonic experiences in tourism. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, principal components analysis (PCA) and Spearman's correlation. In order to reduce the dimensionality of eudaimonic tourism experiences in a destination, principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation was performed, resulting in a single factor. The results of Spearman's correlation revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between eudaimonic tourism experiences and both daily tourist expenditure and the length of stay. Additionally, respondents who reported a higher eudaimonic experience on the island were those who were more likely to stay in local accommodation, prefer to eat local food, buy local souvenirs and generally try to support the local economy. The results also indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between eudaimonic tourism experiences and intentions to revisit the island and recommend it. It can therefore be concluded that tourists who have meaningful and fulfilling experiences during their visit to the island are more likely to return and encourage others to visit. The results of this study suggest that enhancing the eudaimonic aspects of the tourism offer could lead to increased visitor spending, length of stay, loyalty and positive word of mouth. This, in turn, could contribute to the economic benefits for local residents. Developing eudaimonic tourism experiences which focus on personal growth and meaningful engagement, can significantly enhance the economic benefits of a destination by attracting visitors seeking deeper connections and transformative experiences. This study has confirmed that providing this type of tourism experience boosts local economies through increased spending in destination, but also has long term benefits for the destination in terms of revisiting and recommendations. Preferences of "eudaimonic" tourists for local accommodation, food and souvenirs can be used in developing truly authentic and meaningful tourist products and contribute to the uniqueness of destination, which is particularly important for island destinations, struggling with logistical issues, higher seasonality effects and limited space for further infrastructure development.

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## **Tiles and tales: Writing visitor experiences into Portuguese azulejos**

*Ivana Stevic*  
*University of Aveiro*  
*Portugal*  
[ivana.stevic87@ua.pt](mailto:ivana.stevic87@ua.pt)

*Zélia Breda*

**Objectives** | With this communication, we intend to showcase findings of a project co-created with tourists visiting Porto, Portugal, prior to the Covid pandemic. The project aimed at collecting stories of memorable and meaningful experiences of international tourists staying at three hostels in Porto downtown – within or in the immediate vicinity of the area classified as world heritage by the UNESCO – and 'writing' these stories into ceramic tiles with QR codes.

**Methodology** | This study is informed by qualitative, social exploratory research that relied on the case study method to collect narratives by means of interviews, and analyse it combining content, discourse and narrative analyses. The approach also relied on technological tools; however the focus is human-centred – as opposed to technology-driven, and system-centred – as opposed to product-oriented. Storytelling is approached not from an organisational, strategic perspective, although the project did have an element of a somewhat staged experience to it. The focus is rather on elicitation of visitors' lived experiences, where interview is a tool that enabled collection of narratives communicated through storytelling. The intangible human element is combined with a physical object that incorporated local culture, tradition and heritage on the one hand, and digital, social media, virtual space on the other, i.e., the Portuguese tile. The tiles remain at the hostels as an interactive element for future visitors, as well as a reminder of the beauty and importance of cultural heritage and its preservation, and (hopefully) a promoter of more sustainable tourism practices. The narratives are

processed and analysed with the webQDA software for qualitative data analysis, and ArcGIS mapping software.

**Main results and contributions** | The collected stories provided data for a rich and diverse analysis, which is still ongoing. The data was coded according to Pine and Gilmore's 4E model (1998, 1999), Buehring and O'Mahony (2019), and Cupchik and Hilscher (2008) frameworks. We explore various aspects of visitors' personal narratives, including tangible and intangible aspects of their most memorable experiences, i.e., non-sensory and sensory. We also expand the nature-culture dichotomy (see Kitchin & Thrift, 2009) into people-nature-culture trichotomy that emerged from the data. Through exploration of urban spaces mentioned by visitors in their storytelling, we create geographical maps of people's movements, aiming to visualise the most visited (overcrowded) parts of the city and propose alternative routes in an attempt to help alleviate the former.

**Conclusions** | The study brings theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to tourism research and state of the art. It interconnects culture, heritage, technology/ digital/ ICT, storytelling, and visitor experience. It sheds light on the richness of data that can emerge through and from storytelling, and the ways it can be explored in different contexts and combined with different approaches to research and analysis.

### **'Touring' informal green spaces in cities: a multispecies urban justice perspective**

*Marianna Strzelecka*

*Linnaeus University*

*Sweden*

[marianna.strzelecka@lnu.se](mailto:marianna.strzelecka@lnu.se)

*Alberto Amore*

*Arash Akhshik*

The push for sustainability transformations aimed at creating more resilient cities has become a central focus in the urban development agenda. However, the role of non-human entities in these transformations remains largely overlooked. Inclusive and just sustainability transformations require a fundamental paradigm shift in urban development, emphasising the recognition of non-humans as legitimate actors with agency, rights, and needs. This shift raises important questions about how more-than-human transitions can be effectively implemented and where such transformative initiatives can thrive, especially in cities grappling with environmental, social, and economic challenges. Furthermore, critical aspects related to urban livability, quality of life, and their connections with multispecies sustainability remain in their infancy, requiring further exploration and development. Informal green spaces (IGS) represent a unique opportunity to foster inclusive and resilient urban environments through the promotion of human-nonhuman co-stewardship. These spaces, often overlooked in formal urban planning, can provide a platform for multispecies interactions and contribute to sustainable urban ecosystems. Urban tourism, in particular, has the potential to advance multispecies sustainability and shape the development of cities into more inclusive and equitable spaces for all inhabitants. Research suggests that green spaces draw urban roamers—citizens, city users, visitors, and flâneurs—into less frequented or less appealing urban neighbourhoods. The patterns of urban roaming not only influence urban living experiences but also affect the accessibility and maintenance of green spaces within the urban landscape. These dynamics offer an important avenue for fostering multispecies sustainability.

Despite growing debates on urban sustainability and resilience, as well as the role of green spaces in promoting multispecies interactions, tourism scholarship has largely overlooked the connection between multispecies sustainability and urban roaming. Encouraging advancements have been made in related fields, particularly in areas like wildlife equity, post-humanistic justice narratives, and the more-than-human turn in tourism studies. These developments provide a solid foundation for addressing existing research gaps, particularly concerning how urban roaming in IGS can bring attention to non-human agents as rightful inhabitants of cities. By addressing this gap, scholars can better understand the mechanisms that underpin multispecies justice in urban tourism.

This study adopts an interdisciplinary, multispecies perspective to examine how urban roaming in IGS can support multispecies rights to the city. It draws on Anna Tsing's concept of the "art of noticing" as a transformative practice that can reshape how residents and visitors perceive and engage with more-than-human elements in urban environments. The research focuses on 'The Walk,' a participatory methodology conducted in 2023 and 2024 in the IGS of Kalmar, Sweden. This IGS served as a site for exploration and reflection. Two walks were held with international graduate student participants—10 participants in 2023 and 13 in 2024. Guided by the principle of noticing, participants documented their sensory experiences through photographs and reflective writings.

Walking methodologies provided a qualitative framework for sensory inquiries and engagement with the liminal, ambivalent landscapes of IGS. Participants captured moments of noticing, which offered creative insights into their experiences of urban spaces. These reflections were later shared and discussed in group settings.

## **Negotiating Mobility: Tourist Practices and Spatiotemporal Patterns in Rural China**

*Qianfei Su*

*Loughborough University*

*United Kingdom*

[q.su@lboro.co.uk](mailto:q.su@lboro.co.uk)

Rural tourism has been a central focus of both national and local development policies in China, promoted as a strategy for economic revitalisation, rural modernisation, and community development. Government-led initiatives have transformed many villages into tourism destinations, shaping how rural spaces are regulated, experienced, and represented. However, while official management strategies seek to structure tourist mobility through designated routes, guided tours, and regulatory measures, tourists actively negotiate and reshape these spaces through their own behaviours and spatial practices. This paper examines how tourist movement patterns contribute to the construction of rural tourist spaces, focusing on Xidi and Hongcun—two villages listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites that exemplify the intersection of tourism development and rural transformation.

Using data collected between May and October 2023, this study integrates GPS tracking data (n = 390 tourists) with ethnographic observations and interviews to analyse both regulated mobility and spontaneous tourist practices. Findings reveal that while most tourists conform to designated routes for convenience and safety, others deviate in search of authenticity, professional insights, or a more exploratory experience. This divergence in mobility patterns contributes to spatial inequalities, as tourism infrastructure and commercial activities are concentrated along core routes, while peripheral residential areas remain largely unaffected. Additionally, tourists' rhythms of movement and pauses shape the experiential landscape, sometimes challenging management strategies aimed at crowd control. In the evening, shifting visitor flows further illustrate the adaptive use of space, as tourism activities transition from heritage exploration to commercial engagement.

By situating the research within debates on spatial production, tourist performances, and mobility, this study contributes to tourism geography and rural tourism studies. It demonstrates how tourists are active agents in shaping rural tourism spaces, interacting with governance structures and local landscapes in dynamic ways. Methodologically, it advances the integration of GPS tracking with qualitative insights, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of tourism mobility in rural contexts. The findings provide practical implications for sustainable rural tourism planning, particularly in balancing the regulation of tourist flows with the flexibility of visitor experiences.

## **Ageing in the old city: tourism-related (im)mobilities of the elderly population of Venice**

*Elena Tardivo*  
Independent researcher  
Italy  
[elena.tardivo@gmail.com](mailto:elena.tardivo@gmail.com)

*Wilbert den Hoed*  
[wilbertdenhoed@me.com](mailto:wilbertdenhoed@me.com)

The present paper is part of ENTOURAGE project, which investigates active mobility transformations in European tourist cities and their effects on the mobilities of ‘those who remain’ –an ageing population– who cope with change in the tourist city. It engages with the long-term biographies, walking experiences, and the ageing process during an empirical study in which 15 people aged 60-82 participated in walkalong interviews in Venice historic centre.

Leveraging the narrative potential of walkalong interviews (Carpiano 2009), and employing a cultural approach that seeks to provide a holistic perspective on ageing, mobility practices, and the exclusionary effects of tourism, this paper explores how elderly residents of Venice navigate the challenges of physical (im)mobility brought about by natural bodily decline. Simultaneously, it examines how they contend with the intergenerational ruptures caused by the city's heavy shift towards a tourism-based economy, which compels younger generations to migrate and settle elsewhere.

Results from fieldwork indicate that citizens exhibit a high degree of awareness towards the city's cultural attractions and a tendency to aestheticize everyday walks to mundane destinations. Findings also reveal that Venice's historical past -embedded in the material ornaments of the urban palimpsest and daily revived through dietary habits, convivial gatherings and sport practices- becomes deeply intertwined with the personal memories of those who have grown old in the city. Recollections of youthful romances, physical vitality, and vibrant community events blend into the image of a bygone Venice that still awaits to be fully consigned to tourism, through pervasive processes of heritagization. We present these biographies as they emerge from the everyday mobilities of elderly residents. By adopting the dialogic/performance approach to oral narrative (Riessman 2008), which expands the scope of the interpretative work and assigns a prominent role to context, we demonstrate that a narrative of decay and death encompasses both the lives of elderly residents and the life of the city. By reconstructing the fragmented image of Venice as it emerges from the plurivocal accounts of its inhabitants, we argue that old-age residents project their fears of aging onto the “body of the city,” itself threatened by the pressures of tourism and climate change. We illustrate how the evolving life of Venice as an urban artifact unfolds within a life-course trajectory (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991) that mirrors old-age residents biographies. Against this backdrop, we interpret practices of activism and care for the city, shedding light on the complex and ambiguous role of heritage-making processes.

## **Indigenous gastronomy in contemporary tourism**

*Oscar Tiku*  
Tohoku University  
Japan  
[oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp)

Tourism is expected to boost regional food services and its native agriculture. It is essential to shed light on the connection between regional eats and indigenous culture so that the intangible values of history, culture, and wisdom immersed within authentic cuisine are well distributed to a broader audience. However, there has been a lack of representation of indigenous gastronomy in contemporary tourism. This phenomenon is observed mainly in several destinations inhabited by indigenous people and settlers, where food image has been prominently built on and hence represented by recent food culture instead of native gastronomy. Although the consequence might not



be instant, it has an adverse domino effect on the demand for indigenous or ethnic agricultural commodities and produces, then on the farmer and artisan, and if left unresolved, it may eventually lead to food culture loss. Naturally, food cultures are not always conflicted but rather tangled, complemented, and innovated beyond, for instance, the concept of fusion cuisine. Still, like the ancient rituals, calligraphy, heritage, and other tangible and intangible cultures of a particular community that embrace authenticity, the essence and experience of indigenous gastronomy ought to be shared with a broader audience. Visitors found it challenging to experience authentic and/or inspired indigenous cuisine in everyday eateries in the destination. Consequently, the connection between visitors and a part of the local food culture is unfortunately missing.

Despite the emerging research on gastronomy tourism, the debate on the underrepresented indigenous gastronomy in modern tourism remains underexplored. This study aims to investigate the drawbacks through observations and interviews with hotel and restaurant establishments in some relevant destinations. A preliminary study was carried out for Melanesian gastronomy in West Papua and is expected to include the Ainu and Polynesian gastronomies in Hokkaido and Hawai'i. The findings can inform the local stakeholders regarding strategy and policy-making towards promoting Indigenous gastronomy in the region.

### **Pursuing responsible tourism: Case study of whale-watching tourism in Ryukyu Islands**

*Oscar Tiku*

*Tohoku University*

*Japan*

[oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:oscar.tiku.e6@tohoku.ac.jp)

Humpback whales had once disappeared from the waters of the Ryukyu Islands but had returned in the early 1990s. Whale-watching tourism has paved the way for whale conservation in the region and provided a livelihood alternative for coastal and island communities that is non-lethal to the whales. The number of humpback whales observed every winter in the region has increased, implying a recovery. Nonetheless, it still has negative consequences, including sound pollution that disrupts whales' communication and mobility, potential collision, and stress. Guidelines and regulations were established to maintain its operation so that it could limit its adverse impact on animal welfare.

This study investigates the governance of whale-watching tourism in the Ryukyu Islands of Okinawa, Japan. In 2024, we conducted semi-structured interviews with four prominent whale-watching associations and related local stakeholders to explore how responsibly the tour has been carried out and to identify any persisting challenges. Later, we performed reflexive deductive thematic analysis on the obtained data, to identify prominent topics and build up discussion.

Voluntary- or self-regulation is a conventional way to manage whale-watching tourism and is important to safeguard the tour operation within a responsible path. Internal and external communication between associations and other regional stakeholders is important in mitigating conflict and regulation enforcement. Lack of legal power and penalties in self-regulation remain challenging, especially in countering free riders. Incorporating environmental message and quality improvement in interpretation could assist whale-watching tourism achieve its optimal conservational and recreational agenda.

This research contributes to filling the gap in the literature on whale-watching tourism management in Japan, where existing research has been built only on the cetaceans' biology and whaling-related topics. Our findings highlight the pivotal role of primitive self-regulation in the ecotourism management of the region with no or weak legislation power.

Animals in wildlife tourism have long been considered tourism resources or objects. Regardless of their economic, recreational, and conservational benefits, whales in whale-watching tourism could be considered partners instead of merely tourism resources. In that way, animal welfare in tourism could be reconsidered.



## **A view from the street: Children's visual expressions of tourism imaginaries**

*Louise Todd*  
*Edinburgh Napier University*  
*United Kingdom*  
[l.todd@napier.ac.uk](mailto:l.todd@napier.ac.uk)

*Mabel Victoria*  
*Michael Bowdidge*

We will present findings from our research which explores the semiotics of children's visual expressions, while imagining tourism places and experiences from their local area. Our project was conducted with the participation of children from Wester Hailes in southwest Edinburgh (Scotland, UK). Wester Hailes was planned in the mid-twentieth century as a council residential development on Edinburgh's periphery. Today, the area occupies the first decile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It is therefore one of the most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of the extent to which it is disadvantaged across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing (Scottish Government, 2020).

Our project aimed to explore children's perceptions of tourism and their relationships to, place and self, within their local area. Grounded in social constructivism, the research employed a participatory visual arts-based methodology (Leavy, 2020). It was informed by our interdisciplinary perspectives, including tourism studies, visual ethnography, visual arts practice, and practice-led community arts research. The participatory visual arts activity sessions creatively examined different aspects of a tourism imaginary (Salazar, 2012; Salazar & Graburn, 2014) and were underpinned by the tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Over eight weekly, micro-community level, street-based, visual arts workshops, we asked children to imagine they were visiting Wester Hailes as tourists. The children were invited to respond to preselected verbal and visual prompts to encourage them to express their imaginative interpretations of the local area. Using a range of visual media— including drawing and mapping with chalk, taking selfies, sightseeing photographs, and designing postcards of the local area – revealed how children perceive and reframe their community through a tourism lens.

Through presenting visual artefacts and field notes from the project, we will reflect on the semiotic 'signs': the surface, deeper, and mythical, layers of meaning, communicated in the children's visual expressions (Barthes, 1993; Todd, 2022). These reveal that while many of the children had limited personal experiences of travel and of being tourists, their imaginaries of tourism through visual expressions presented a rich and detailed gaze. We will conclude by reflecting on the value of participatory visual arts-based approaches when engaging with local communities and children. Our study contributes to visual tourism research by extending its application to children's perspectives, challenging textocentricity, and showcasing how visual arts-based methods and semiotics illuminate tourism's evolving realities amid profound spatial and social transitions.

## **Circular Economy in Tourism and Hospitality: A Micro-Meso-Macro Framework for Inter-Disciplinary Research**

*Lucia Tomassini*  
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com](mailto:lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com)

*Rodolfo Baggio*  
[rodolfo.baggio@unibocconi.it](mailto:rodolfo.baggio@unibocconi.it)

*Ioanna Farsari*  
[ifa@du.se](mailto:ifa@du.se)

*Matthias Fuchs*  
[matthias.fuchs@unibz.it](mailto:matthias.fuchs@unibz.it)

*Flemming Sørensen*  
[flemmiso@ruc.dk](mailto:flemmiso@ruc.dk)

This contribution elaborates on the theoretical and practical implications of the circular economy in tourism and hospitality through an inter-disciplinary approach advancing novel possibilities for future research. Acknowledging the literature gap on circular economy in tourism and hospitality as an under-researched and under-theorised area of research, this contribution identifies a set of theoretical lenses that can help to elaborate the notion of circular economy and unpack it through an inter-disciplinary approach for future research. It does so by discussing the notion of circular economy through a micro-meso-macro framework combining practice theory, network theory, complexity theory, and the spatial and mobilities turn in social sciences. The originality of this work lies in its inter-disciplinary approach based on a micro-meso-macro theoretical framework offering novel opportunities to discuss, envision, and operationalize circular regenerative processes in tourism futures in terms of multidimensional, networked, complex, practice-based, and localised processes and operations.

## **Posthumanism and animal geography: the case of Freya the walrus on media**

*Lucia Tomassini*  
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences  
Netherlands  
[lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com](mailto:lucia.tomassini@nhlstenden.com)

Biodiversity loss, climate change and depletion of natural habitats urge a critical reflection on the human conceptualisation of wildlife space. Within the context of tourism, this study critically discusses the (lack of) space for wildlife in a sociological and physical space that is increasingly human, built, and touristified. Drawing on concepts of animal geography, this study adopts a posthuman lens to examine the media's understanding and representation of wildlife in a space largely presented as anthropic - i.e. pertaining to humans. Using Labovian structural narrative analysis, this study focuses on the online breaking news of the killing of the walrus Freya in Oslofjord on the 14 august 2022 to unpack the media's narrativisation of wildlife in anthropic and tourism-related contexts. the data analysis identified two emerging themes in the online news media narrativisation. the theme of presenting the wildlife as a tourist attraction and untidy guest, and a mutually exclusive choice between human and wildlife safety. the research challenges the media human-centred stance towards wildlife and advocates further investigation for a 'more-than-human' spatiality in tourism studies for

human and non-human visitors. in doing so this study contributes to the literature by urging a rethinking of our relation- ship with wildlife in a space increasingly perceived as mainly human.

## **Rural tourism beyond the Capitalocene: A Posthumanist approach to Post-growth**

*Marlisa Ayu Trisia*  
*University of Girona*  
*Spain*  
[marlisa.trisia@udg.edu](mailto:marlisa.trisia@udg.edu)

*Lluís Prats*  
*Jaume Guàrdia*

Tourism is often positioned as a pathway to sustainable development in rural areas. However, scholars argue that tourism activities and research remain narrowly developed, frequently serving the interests of a select group of individuals and organizations. The dominant tourism industry, deeply embedded in Capitalocene ideologies, prioritizes perpetual growth, profit maximization, and consumerism. Rural areas exemplify these challenges, as tourism commodifies rural identities, stages local heritage, and standardizes experiences, transforming rural landscapes from spaces of production into sites of consumption. While rural tourism is often promoted as a solution for revitalization, its extractive nature frequently results in economic, socio-cultural, and ecological consequences that do not align with the long-term well-being of rural communities. Moreover, rural landscapes are sometimes increasingly transformed into tourist attractions through excessive commodification of nature reflecting the exploitative nature of the Capitalocene paradigm. Practices such as deforestation for resorts, over-extraction of water resources, and pollution from tourism activities exacerbate environmental degradation, accelerate climate change, and deepen social inequalities in rural areas. In response to these challenges, post-growth frameworks are gaining recognition as alternatives to conventional tourism models. These frameworks question the sustainability of endless economic expansion and instead emphasize human well-being within planetary limits. However, rural tourism policies continue to be shaped by urban-centric perspectives that impose external priorities on rural communities, often measuring success through city-derived economic indicators and visitation figures. These approaches tend to privilege wealthier populations while marginalizing rural stakeholders, reinforcing existing structural inequalities. However, despite its potential to foster more sustainable tourism, post-growth frameworks remains underexplored in rural tourism discourse. Moreover, posthumanist perspectives offer alternative ways to conceptualize tourism beyond the anthropocentric by recognizing the agency of non-human entities to expand the ethical and philosophical framework of tourism by promoting a more inclusive perspective. Yet, its relevance has not been significantly explored into post-growth frameworks. Therefore, this research seeks to bridge this gap by addressing two fundamental questions: 1) How can post-growth be realized in rural areas, particularly in tourism, while challenging urban-centric practices? And 2) How can a posthumanist approach theoretically support this transformation? By exploring these questions, our study provokes debate on how tourism can evolve beyond anthropocentric and consumer-driven models, as well as contributing to the theoretical reconceptualization of rural tourism models by paving the way for a more regenerative, inclusive, and sustainable future.

## **Coevolving path development and coopetition challenges in cross-border Silk Road destinations**

*Yuliya Tsvilik*  
*Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
*Spain*  
[yuliya.tsvilik@estudiants.urv.cat](mailto:yuliya.tsvilik@estudiants.urv.cat)

*Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez*  
*Salvador Anton Clavé*  
*Marcus Herntrei*

This study is focused on the topic of cross-border regional path development coevolution analysing the Silk Road project and the role and challenges of coopetition among Central Asian countries as case study. It aims to explore why these nations exhibit varying levels of tourism development, analyze the geopolitical and governance barriers hindering the tourism sector's capacity to drive inter-territorial relations, and examine the coevolutionary development paths of cross-border regions with a specific emphasis on coopetition processes.

The research applies the theoretical frameworks of evolutionary economic geography (EEG) and relational economic geography (REG) to analyze the intra- and inter-regional organization and dynamics within the Silk Road initiative by focusing on path dependence as one of the key catalysts for destination evolution. It provides a deep outlook of the role of the Silk Road project in Central Asian countries to understand what is relevant in terms of tourism development. It also discusses the historical political and cultural ties of the region to other important geoeconomic powers, such as China, Russia, European Union, and multilateral institutions such as UNWTO, emphasizing how partnerships with them have influenced and still influence the coevolution of the Silk Road countries therein both from general and tourism perspectives. The study also helps understand how cross-border coopetition processes and coevolution exist and develop in the concourse of past and ongoing experiences in the region.

Methodologically, the research relies on a documentary analysis of secondary sources. Documentary analysis is chosen as the most adequate method to gain understanding about the cross-border coevolving path development and the current situation of tourism destinations in the region, as well as the potential of coopetition strategies in this regard. The secondary sources will include local and regional planning documents, media articles, annual reports, and academic publications. These documents will be carefully evaluated to select the most relevant and influential inputs according to the framework of the study and are subjected to an iterative analysis procedure based on an initial analysis of the documents to determine relevant content, along with a detailed and thorough scrutiny and ultimate interpretation. Complementarily, official statistical data, obtained from such research hubs as World Travel & Tourism Council, World Bank, Asia Regional Integration Center, UNWTO, and the Silk Road related countries, are sought and compiled to gain a wider perspective of the current cross border tourism development situation in the whole Silk Road region.

In terms of the results, the study provides an outlook of the whole research by explaining the added value of integrating the EEG-REG approach and coopetition theory, and specifically, the role of coevolving path development processes in cross-border destinations. It also identifies the further potential for cross-border tourism destinations cooperation. Hence, the findings obtained from the study are of value not only for the specific region's evolution, but also for further research within the framework of evolutionary economic geography and relational economic geography.

## **Adaptive reuse of castles in Slovenia: We might be witnessing a trend of disenchantment with tourism**

*Maja Turnsek*  
*University of Maribor*  
*Slovenia*  
[maja.turnsek@um.si](mailto:maja.turnsek@um.si)

*Miloš Kosec*  
*Barbara Lampič*  
*Metka Dernovšek*

In this paper, we focus on the adaptive reuse of castles, manors, and mansions in Slovenia. Castle heritage in Slovenia represents a category of architectural heritage where the question of adaptive reuse of tangible cultural heritage is of particular importance. Historically, more than 1,300 castles once stood on the Slovenian territory. There are approximately 90 preserved castles while others represent various stages of ruins, some of which still being used for cultural and creative tourism. The aim of the paper is to analyse the role of cultural tourism in adaptive reuse of Slovenian castles. We use a twofold collection of research methods. First, we use quantitative content analysis and statistics to analyse the state of the art in adaptive reuse of castles in Slovenia: analyses of official registers. The second pillar of research are qualitative case studies of cases selected on purposive sampling aimed at covering the variety of business models of adaptive reuse of Slovenian castles. The results show a potentially important shift away from the cultural tourism as the solution for adaptive reuse of Slovenian castles, following a specific trajectory. It is important to note that after the WWII the castles were taken as a symbol of social inequalities and have often been burned or reused for purposes such as public housing or mental health institutions but without much care for heritage preservation. On the other hand, there was a strong trend towards transforming some of the castles to local museums based mostly on local civic associations' push. Museums and cultural tourism were long seen as the only appropriate way to preserve castle heritage as a public good. After 1991 in the process of denationalization castles were either bought by the state and often transformed to state-funded museums and/or given to municipalities, sold to private investors or given back to pre-WWII owners who often do not have the funds to afford the adaptation. The results of our research show that while municipalities in urban environments and near tourist flows continue to opt for the reuse of castles for cultural tourism this is no longer a viable option for municipalities in rural and remote areas, particularly after the state stopped the process of financing new museums. What we may be observing, is a slow "disenchantment" with cultural tourism as a solution for adaptive reuse of castles in all contexts. Although reliable data on this trend in Slovenia are not yet available, it can be linked to broader phenomena, including the rise of mass tourism, the exceeding of carrying capacities in some Slovenian destinations, labour shortages and reduced attractiveness of work in tourism, and the global shift toward resistance to mass tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic and discourse around overtourism. We may be witnessing a reversal of the adaptive reuse trend, shifting back to functions akin to those of the criticised past: namely other social roles that municipalities must provide, such as elderly care home, as shown by the specific example of recent adaptive reuse of the Javornik castle.

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## **Climate change mitigation in tourism: looking for answers in alternative hedonism and limitarianism**

*Maja Turnsek*  
*University of Maribor*  
*Slovenia*  
[maja.turnsek@um.si](mailto:maja.turnsek@um.si)

*Nejc Pozvek*

While providing recommendations to tourism policy, industry, and tourists on climate change mitigation in Slovenian tourism (Turnšek et al. 2024, Turnšek & Pogačar, 2024) we could not help but feeling we are not doing enough. We did not address the broader, more difficult questions of tourism and degrowth in needed response to climate change mitigation but rather mostly provided technical solutions. Especially the question of what counts as “avoidance” amongst mitigation measures stirred discussions in the team, where we finally opted for a pragmatic middle option, such as for example “avoid more trips and instead replace them with one longer – thus avoiding the carbon footprint of several transports to travel destinations” (alternative could be “stay home”).

This paper serves to try to address this issue by analysing current political thought of two authors. First is Soper’s (2023) argument for alternative hedonism. Her main claim is that in the affluent societies the call for post-growth living does not mean that consumers would need to decrease their pleasure but rather the opposite, that alternative hedonism would mean more pleasure in changing the way we work, travel and consume. According to Soper (2003) if we want to call for climate mitigation we need to point out what we are losing with the current forms of fast-travelling in over-burdened work-life. Currently, she claims, the representations of need, desire and pleasure not focused on consumption are marginalised. On the other hand, we turn to arguments of Robeyns (2024) on limitarianism, arguing for limits on extreme wealth. We analyse the vision of tourism each author puts forward. Do their visions of tourism overlap or are there any incompatibilities? Where are the limits of these visions and current critiques? Finally, how, if at all, would we change any of our climate change mitigation advice to the Slovenian tourism stakeholders (tourists, industry and policy) considering these two visions and their critiques of the status quo in tourism? What potential responses could we anticipate from Slovenian tourists, industry, and policy makers?

## **Sustainable Futures for Island Destinations: Comparative Insights from Hawaii and the Galápagos Archipelagos**

*Juan Carlos Valdivieso*  
*Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)*  
*Ecuador*  
[jcvaldivieso@usfq.edu.ec](mailto:jcvaldivieso@usfq.edu.ec)

*Adam Burke*

The intensification of tourism-related consumption is escalating pressures on ecosystems globally, with island destinations particularly vulnerable due to their geographic isolation and ecological fragility (Valdivieso et al., 2023; Burke, 2021; Carlsen & Butler, 2011). This paper investigates the sustainability challenges faced by island tourism through a comparative analysis of Hawaii and the Galápagos Islands, focusing on the tensions between conservation imperatives and tourism-dependent economies. It evaluates Hawaii’s Aloha+ Challenge as a model for sustainability initiatives and examines its applicability to the Galápagos Islands’ context, offering insights into localized sustainability transitions in fragile island systems.

Hawaii’s Aloha+ Challenge, launched in 2014, aligns with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing six priorities: clean energy, local food production, natural resource management, waste reduction, sustainable communities, and green workforce development.



This initiative integrates spatial and environmental dimensions into governance and employs a public dashboard for transparency and accountability. Despite its success in political continuity and fostering transnational collaboration through the Local2030 Islands Network, gaps persist in engaging local tourism stakeholders and embedding sustainability practices more deeply within the tourism sector (Hawaii Tourism Authority, 2020; 2024).

The Galápagos Islands, renowned for their exceptional biodiversity and dependency on tourism, exemplify the challenges of balancing economic reliance on tourism with ecological conservation. Tourism generates approximately 80% of the local economy but intensifies pressures on limited resources and infrastructure (Pizzitutti et al., 2017; GNPD, 2024). The 2030 Strategic Plan for the Galápagos outlines ambitious sustainability goals, yet it lacks operationalized metrics, effective monitoring, and strong stakeholder engagement mechanisms (Galápagos 2030, 2020; Burbano et al., 2022). Interviews with key stakeholders highlight systemic barriers, including political instability, underfunding, and insufficient local participation in governance and development initiatives (Espin et al., 2019).

This study's comparative analysis underscores the potential of the Aloha+ Challenge as a transferable framework for the Galápagos, particularly in its use of localized metrics, public accountability systems, and participatory governance models. It also emphasizes the critical role of leveraging transnational networks, such as the Local2030 Islands Network, to foster collaborative knowledge exchange and build resilience among island destinations (Hayward, 2012).

The findings highlight the importance of a dynamic, multi-scalar approach to achieving sustainable tourism in islands. This includes integrating bottom-up community engagement with top-down governance structures to ensure long-term continuity and adaptability. Moreover, aligning local actions with global frameworks like the SDGs provides a pathway for addressing ecological and socio-economic vulnerabilities specific to island contexts.

By bridging lessons from Hawaii to the Galápagos, this paper contributes to broader discussions in tourism geography on the intersection of space, place, and environmental governance. It offers actionable insights for safeguarding the ecological and cultural assets of tourism-dependent regions while fostering resilience and equity. Ultimately, Hawaii and the Galápagos are positioned as critical sites for examining the complexities of sustainability transitions in the age of ecological precarity and global uncertainty.

## **When in Copenhagen, Be Like and With the Locals. Sustainable Lifestyles as a Tourism Resource**

*Jordi Vegas-Macias*  
*Roskilde University*  
*Denmark*  
[vegas@ruc.dk](mailto:vegas@ruc.dk)

Practicing sustainability while traveling is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering responsible behaviour that aligned environmental and social goals (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2022). Everyday sustainable practices—such as cycling to work, participating in volunteer activities, and consuming locally sourced products—have evolved beyond individual lifestyle choices or policy outcomes. These practices are increasingly leveraged as resources for shaping tourism destination narratives, promoting sustainable tourism experiences, and encouraging climate and socially conscious behaviour among visitors (Hultman et al., 2024).

This shift represents a move from traditional, passive tourist-resident interactions to immersive models where tourists actively engage in sustainability practices alongside local communities (Huijbens, 2023; Lehto et al., 2020). Aligning these practices with tourism narratives enhances destination appeal and fosters meaningful encounters between tourists and residents, promoting mutual understanding and shared responsibility. However, over-commercialising local lifestyles risks undermining resident well-being, challenging conviviality, and compromising the very sustainable practices that serve as the foundation of destination branding (Diaz-Parra & Jover, 2021). Furthermore, framing sustainability as a fixed narrative may obscure critical reflections on how such practices are achieved.

Using the context of the city of Copenhagen as a case study, this paper explores the integration of local sustainable practices into destination branding. Renowned for its ambition to become the world's most sustainable destination, Copenhagen exemplifies how local lifestyles are abstracted, transformed into a unique selling point, and marketed through policies, collaborations, and promotional materials. A document analysis approach examines official reports, policy documents, and tourism materials to uncover how sustainable living narratives are institutionalised and leveraged to shape the city's global image and cultural capital.

The study reveals how sustainable lifestyles are reframed as assets for attracting visitors, fostering international collaborations, and enhancing Copenhagen's global appeal. It also evaluates the potential of sustainable and regenerative tourism models to catalyse environmental stewardship and social cohesion. By investigating the interplay between sustainability narratives and urban tourism strategies, this research contributes to the discourse on sustainable tourism, emphasizing the need to balance destination promotion with social sustainability and resident well-being.

## **Co-Creation and Community Building: The Role of BOCA in Adolescent Cultural Engagement**

*Marushka Vidovic*  
*Noupop Asociacion*  
*Spain*  
[marushka@thisisdema.org](mailto:marushka@thisisdema.org)

*Aileen Morrissey*  
[aileen.morrissey@gmail.com](mailto:aileen.morrissey@gmail.com)

*Xavier Villanueva*  
*Maria Victoria Rios*  
*Maia López*

The work of Barcelona's BOCA collective is based on the core principle of co-creation and addressed to a unique and vital target group, that of adolescents. It includes the award-winning BOCA program, music festival and research project.

The annual BOCA music festival, created by and for an exclusively adolescent audience, aims to provide an innovative cultural space in which teens can connect, exchange and create a dynamic community around the project. This immersive creative process in which adolescents explore and actively participate in all the areas of event programming, communication and production, is transformational and empowering, promoting social cohesion and community engagement.

The BOCA Recerca research project, funded by the Ajuntament de Barcelona and Ministerio de Igualdad, adopted BOCA's hallmark focus on co-creation and was led by a core group made up of a professional researcher, members of the BOCA management team and representatives of the BOCA Youth Council. This core team worked on every aspect of the research project, from the initial question to the final conclusions.

The aim of the research was to carry out a case study of BOCA in order to investigate the construction of an adolescent cultural community through BOCA activities, the sense of community of adolescents participating in BOCA and their perception of gender equality.

This paper describes this research process during its different phases - preparation, field work, analysis and information (Lozares and Verd, 2016) - insisting on the didactic value of such an experience for young people. It highlights the importance of participation in the creation of cultural events as essential for community engagement and for the promotion and defense of cultural rights. It describes a unique strategy for enhancing community involvement, providing insightful knowledge of this specific, highly volatile and creative adolescent demographic, and the need for their inclusion in cultural spaces.

## **The power of visuals in destination image formation: Exploring climate crisis' effects**

*Serena Volo*  
*Free University of Bozen*  
*Italy*  
[serena.volo@unibz.it](mailto:serena.volo@unibz.it)

Recent studies in tourism discuss the need for more methodological engagement with visual data (Balomenou & Garrod, 2019; Volo and Irimias, 2021). Social media and the growing availability of rich visual datasets can contribute to understand tourists' behaviour, preferences and destination image formation (Deng & Li, 2018; Höckert et al. 2018; Volo and Irimias, 2021) and also to explore and confront tourism's evolving realities in time transitions and transformation. Indeed, systematic research exploring the explicit and implicit meanings of photos can enhance knowledge and comprehension of visuals in tourism theory and practice (Rakić & Chambers, 2012).

Coastal, island and mountain destinations are exposed to the effects of climate crises with its consequences such as heat waves (Arabadzhyan et al. 2021; Barcena-Martin, Molina and Ruiz-Sinoga, 2019), the loss of biodiversity and land surface (Albergel et al., 2019), raised sea level and beach erosion (Bigano et al. 2008) and reduced snow availability (Bausch, Gartner and Humpe, 2021; Breiling and Charamza, 1999; Damm et al. 2017). Scholars have only recently started to investigate specific tourism setting with reference to climate crisis and have begun to explore the usage of social media data (e.g.: Arabadzhyan et al., 2021 studied Mediterranean destinations using Instagram photos and focusing on the effects of heatwaves on tourists, and Becken et al. 2021 studied Twitter posts to explore climate change and tourists flight shame feeling).

In this vein, this study explores the use of visual social media to tackle the effect of climate crises on tourists and destinations. In order to fully capture the value of visual data the research combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The study setting is the Dolomites as the research wants to demonstrate how visuals can enhance our understanding of climate change in mountain destinations. Instagram was used a source for visuals but complemented with archive documentations and photographs of the mountain glaciers and alpine lakes. The study uses a mixed method embedding both (a) an interpretivist approach to the understanding of visuals and their meanings thus capturing the tourists' appraisal of climate crises, and (b) a positivist approach to big visual data that enables the development of models to estimate the effects of climate crises and thus allowing to propose consequent policy implications.

The study offers (a) a theoretical framework that merges the different disciplinary approaches, (b) a methodological advancement that proposes a mixed-method analysis of novel visual data with respect to climate data, and (c) an empirical contribution that, focusing on Alpine destinations, can offer local decision-makers sound marketing and policy suggestions with respect to an evolving destination image as results of climate crises.

## **From Culture to Customer Care: Attributes Shaping Tattoo Tourism Experiences**

*Surarak Wichupankul*  
*Prince of Songkla University*  
*Thailand*  
[surarakstar@gmail.com](mailto:surarakstar@gmail.com)

*Nichapat Sangkaew*  
[nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:nichapat.s@phuket.psu.ac.th)

*Chayanon Phucharoen*

Tattoo tourism has witnessed a significant rise in popularity among tourists seeking distinctive and personalized travel experiences, making it necessary to understand tourist behavior through their authentic experiences. Tattoo tourists are motivated by a desire to engage in tattoo-related activities,

or get unique designs from renowned artists, such as Sak Yant or Thai tattoo. Existing research has centered on the role of tattoos on tourist motivation, tourism experience narrative, and emotional impacts on tourists. Despite the growing interest in tattoo tourism, research providing insights into the tourist behaviour and leveraging experience-based content generated by tourists remains limited. To address this gap, this study identifies the key attributes that define the tattoo tourism experience in Thailand, where tattoo culture intersects with customer care. Employing a data-driven approach, the study integrates text analysis, thematic analysis, and importance-performance analysis (IPA) to evaluate mention frequency and sentiment scores from Google reviews which is the platform that provide authentic perspectives.

Tourists' experience-based comments were extracted from 664 tattoo studios, resulting in a total total of 21,632 reviews across leading tourism destinations in Thailand, including Bangkok, Phuket, Chonburi, Chiangmai, and Surat Thani. Only the reviews in English-language from July 2023 to June 2024 were included in the study. The analysis focused on tattoo-specific terms, excluding general expressions of emotion and feeling to provide a clear and contextually relevant overview of the tattoo experience in Thailand. The terms derived from text analysis reflect the experiences valued by tourists. 'Artist' was found to be the most frequently mentioned, with 5,126 mentions. This emphasizes the artist's skill, creativity, and client interactions. 'Great' (4,175), 'Amazing' (3,362), and 'Super' (3,194) indicated high levels of customer satisfaction and denoted surpasses of customer expectation. Additionally, 'Clean' (3,011) and 'Professional' (3,143) highlighted the importance of professionalism, particularly relevant in risk perception during getting tattoo.

Thematic analysis identified six key attributes of tattoo experience, including cultural significance, safety, quality of service, artist, studio, and value for money. The application of IPA indicated that 'Safety' and 'Quality of service' were perceived as significant strengths while 'Studio' and 'Value for money' were regarded as key weaknesses requiring immediate attention. Additionally, tattoo tourists expressed high satisfaction with 'Cultural significance' and 'Artist' attributes.

This study uncovered significant attributes in tattoo tourism that shaped the tourist experience, drawing from firsthand reviews voluntarily generated by tourists. These findings offer valuable insights to tourist behavior, serving as a foundation for a better understanding their needs and preferences. The study provides practical guidelines for tattoo studios to enhance the tourist experience and improve service quality. Additionally, it offers recommendations for tourism practitioners to effectively elevate and promote tattoo tourism destination.

## **Generative AI and Robust Educational Practices for Tourism**

*Angela Wright*  
*Munster Technological University*  
*Ireland*  
[angela.wright@mtu.ie](mailto:angela.wright@mtu.ie)

This research explores the new and disruptive technology of Generative Artificial Intelligence and the considerable challenges for Higher Educational (HE) examination and research processes. The future success of the tourism and hospitality sector in an ever-challenging environment is reliant on graduates of HE Institutions being equipped with an up-to-date learnt knowledge, best practice and an ethical approach; however, how can educators ensure their current students authentically learn in a new uncertain, unregulated artificial intelligence world?

When it comes to research in the tourism and hospitality sector, robust practices are expected where students, graduates and their research supervisors and mentors adhere to regulated and ethical standards and practices. When it comes to delivering relevant and applicable empirical research findings to industry, the expectation is that these findings are trustworthy, real, ethical, comply with GDPR, Intellectual Property, and are not biased in any way.

When GenAI applications and large language models (LLMs) are introduced, the learning dynamic and environment changes, and outputs may not be solid and can be questionable. Wright (2024) outlines that there are also considerable risks when using these platforms, particularly to education,

learning and research, and users need extensive training to be fully informed and understand the limitations and risks.

Educators are tasked with ensuring the integrity of teaching, learning, research supervision and examination. Now, this integrity for our students and future graduates has never been more critical. Therefore, this work questions - with the dawn of ready and ample opportunities to access Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) technology - how can educators traverse these complexities, often unsupported by clear directions or procedures, due to the rapidly changing nature of Artificial Intelligence where it is impossible to keep abreast of the constant evolution (European Commission, 2024).

When it comes to Doctoral Education, for example, European HE must follow a set of principles and must be consistent with European and international standards including the Salzburg principles, the Salzburg II recommendations, and Principles for Innovative Doctoral training (HEA.ie). Academic research excellence is fundamental to quality research activity (Gov.ie) and the HEA's Principles of Good Practice in Research in Irish Higher Education Institutions provide "a clear and consistent framework for HE institutions" (Gov.ie); however, how to keep up?

To gather the empirical data, after an extensive review of relevant literature, academic staff were asked to contribute to this study and 103 lecturers took part from each disciplinary area across the entire university setting. Once gathered, the data was analysed using a thematic approach. Full ethical clearance was obtained, and all participants remained anonymous. To ensure a balanced perspective, students were also invited to contribute and, to date, 25 students attended workshops. Working with the students was very informative and students shared their fears and concerns, and it was interesting to hear their perspective on GenAI.

Findings and recommendations for best practice as the university navigates this disruptive space will be presented during the conference proceedings - with standout perspectives such as fear, authenticity, paranoia, lack of critical thinking, undermining the bedrock of university culture, integrity of research and policing. Students' views were encouraging with concerns expressed around AI outputs being "fake" or "hallucinations". Students want to show that their college work is vigorous and of quality, as this will affect their employability.

New paths to assessment such as co-creation, working together with students, student campaigns, new assessment approaches, more authentic assessments, increased viva touch points and an overall re-engineering of the PhD process will be explored.

## **Beyond Lovers and Haters: Understanding Resident Perspectives on the Social Impact of Events - The Case of the F1 Dutch Grand Prix**

*Kristel Zegers*  
*Breda University of Applied Sciences*  
*Netherlands*  
[zegers.k@buas.nl](mailto:zegers.k@buas.nl)

The small Dutch coastal village of Zandvoort is known as a tourist destination, welcoming an average of 5 million (day)visitors a year. Since 2021 it has also been hosting the Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix (DGP), attracting 100.000 event visitors a day. To accommodate event visitors traveling to Zandvoort by train, railway barriers are continuously closed for three days, impacting the daily life of the 17.000 inhabitants of Zandvoort. Quantitative research has been carried out to investigate the economic and social impact of the event in 2021, 2022, and 2023. One element of this longitudinal study was a survey among Zandvoort residents investigating their perceptions on the positive and negative social impacts of the event. While the enthusiasm for hosting the Formula 1 was enormous, resistance towards the event gradually grew over the three years of the study. Data from 736 inhabitants (DGP 2023) indicated that the event potentially had a polarizing effect, dividing the inhabitants of Zandvoort into lovers and haters. While the lovers stressed the positive social impacts of the event and referred to its long tradition and economic benefits, the haters emphasized the negative effects, stressing environmental concerns and noise pollution. To go beyond this distinction between lovers and haters, and to untangle underlying complexities, a content analysis will be carried out on the 400 responses to

the open question of why residents considered the positive and negative social effects important. Here, special attention will be paid to how inhabitants refer to balancing economic, social, and ecological goals. Do respondents point to the role of events in developing sustainable communities (as discussed by Mair and Smith, 2022)? Results of this analysis will be shared during the conference presentation.