

## Tourism and development

Tourism is a large and growing global-scale phenomenon with a wide range of socio-cultural, economic, ecological and political impacts. While it has a multitude of elements and dimensions, tourism as an activity is often seen – sometimes solely – through an economic lens. According to the World Bank (2012), for example, tourism is a three-billion-a-day business, and estimates suggest that it accounts for approximately 9% of global production. Also in geographical research tourism was firmly located under economic geography until the early 1970s. However, since then many elements and views related to the nature of tourism have changed. Although some scholars may still regard tourism as a service sector issue, a purely economic phenomenon and/or an academically tedious activity based on wealthy people's voluntary mobility and related consumption during their free time, research on tourism geographies since the 1970s has promoted much more pluralist and critical views on the phenomenon and the relationship between tourism and development and tourism and places, for example (see Britton 1982; Hall & Page 2009). In addition, as Chris Gibson (2008: 418) has noted, tourism geography “appears to be on the whole more cosmopolitan” with “its own geography of production and circulation, variegated differently than for other parts of geography.”

Obviously the economic dimension in geographical tourism research is still important and tourism is often studied (and used) as a vehicle for economic development. Indeed, the economic emphasis is one relevant perspective on tourism as an industry in regional settings. Even in that context, however, the tourism – (regional) development nexus is not necessarily seen as being straightforward; instead, it is regarded as involving a complex set of interlinkages and non-linkages, inclusions and exclusions, continuations and breaks. Thus, even from an economic perspective, tourism is not always “just an economy” but also a form of governing localities with implications for local livelihoods, ways of living, socio-political networks, culture, biopolitics, access to resources and the environment, and so on.

Since the 1990s, the development thinking in tourism geographies was further broadened when the ideology of sustainability became visible and

hegemonic in tourism and development research. Recently, ethical aspects in tourism and development and related modes of production and consumption have been emphasised in tourism geographies (Fennell 2006, 2012), with links to elements such as climate change, global poverty reduction, post/neo colonialism, political economy and the empowerment of previously marginalised and disadvantaged groups (see Gibson 2010; Scheyvens 2011; Hall 2013; Nepal & Saarinen 2016).

This special issue brings together research papers focusing on tourism and development and how tourism connects with places and people. Kulusjärvi's research explores the connections between resort-oriented tourism development and tourism business cooperation in the tourist destination of Ruka-Kuusamo, north-east Finland. Kulusjärvi emphasises how local cooperative networks at Ruka are spatially constructed within a larger tourism destination. Interestingly, her results indicate that resort-oriented tourism development does not distribute significant benefits to the wider destination region. This finding implying inclusions and exclusions in development is in contrast with the hegemonic tourism and public investment thinking highlighted in current Finnish tourism policies and governance models. In a regional policy context, Almstedt, Lundmark and Petterson focus on the role of tourism in rural development with an aim to investigate the distribution of public spending on tourism in rural areas of Sweden. In addition, they seek to analyse how policy-makers understand the idea and contribution potential of rural tourism. Their results show that a relatively small amount of total public spending actually targets tourism. Thus, they conclude that although public efforts are focused on adequate parts of the industry, the “rhetoric efforts” cannot be expected to contribute significantly to the actual restructuring of the rural economy. In the rural Swedish context, Möller continues to study how tourism affects young residents' perceptions of and affective bonds to rural touristic spaces in the ski resort of Sälen. Based on the results, young people experience that tourism contributes to a more vital community, without eliminating the positive aspects associated with a rural way of living. Thus, the socio-economic and cultural development contributions of tourism are

seen positively, making Sälen a more attractive to young adults to stay and live in.

Gutberlet's paper expands the tourism-development nexus to the socio-cultural impacts of large-scale cruise tourism by analysing the tourism impacts on the traditional bazaar (souq) in the district of Mutrah, Oman. Her results indicate that due to increasing mass scale tourism, the bazaar has transformed into a "tourist bubble", with related problems of crowding. This has partially displaced local residents, who avoid the place due to the large number of tourists. In a different mass tourism context, Vainikka analyses tourist guides' relationship with tourism destinations, with a case study that focuses on Finnish package tourism spaces in Crete. She studies the situated spatial relationships within destination spaces and the positionality of the guides. According to her results, the guides work with two ideas of spatiality, namely intensive and extensive, through which the spatialities of mass tourism are interpreted on an ideal and a practical level. In the final paper, Kavita and Saarinen review the existing policy and planning frameworks in Namibia that relate to tourism and rural development. Their research note particularly targets Community-Based Tourism (CBT) policies initiated by the Namibian government. While the CBT projects can be locally important, the review concludes that there is a need for a comprehensive national-level tourism policy that could integrate the mainstream tourism industry into rural and community development needs more widely in the future.

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