
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Eveline S. van Leeuwen is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Spatial Economics at the VU University Amsterdam. Since 2010, she has also been a Visiting Assistant Research Professor at the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory (REAL) at the University of Illinois. Her background is in spatial planning and regional economics. Her current work consists of participating in several EU-funded projects with a wide range of topics. In addition, she has various teaching activities in the bachelor programme 'Earth and Economics'. Her main interests lie in combining micro and macro methods and adding a (stronger) spatial component to this framework.

Álvaro Matias received his PhD in Economics from the School of Economics and Management of the Technical University of Lisbon (ISEG), together with his MSc in Economics and Social Policy and a Postgraduation in Monetary and Financial Economics from the same institution. He is presently an Invited Professor and Researcher at the Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa. His main research interests are related with tourism economics, transport systems and history of the economic thought. He has several books, book chapters and papers published in international peer reviewed journals, predominantly related with social economic issues and the economics and management of tourism.

Peter Nijkamp is a Professor in Regional and Urban Economics and in Economic Geography at the VU University, Amsterdam. His main research interests cover quantitative plan evaluation, regional and urban modelling, multicriteria analysis, transport systems analysis, mathematical systems modelling, technological innovation, entrepreneurship, environmental and resource management and sustainable development. In the past years, he has focused on new quantitative methods for policy analysis and on spatial-behavioural analysis of economic agents. He is the former President of the Netherlands Research Council (NWO). In 1996, he was awarded the most prestigious scientific prize in The Netherlands, the Spinoza Award.

Tourism is increasingly regarded as one of the development vehicles of a region, while it is an important growth sector in a country's economy. Therefore, modern (mass) tourism will inevitably lead to increased competition among tourist destinations, as each tourist region seeks to attract a maximum share of the total stock of tourists. However, as tourism clearly is a complex phenomenon that generates various positive and negative socio-economic and ecological impacts, the need for sustainable tourism is apparent. This special issue focuses on sustainable and cultural tourism. An important instrument that can contribute to a sustainable cultural tourism sector is the use of e-services. Since online services are continuously accessible, time and geographic differences do not hinder the interaction between tourism service providers and their customers anymore. By using ICT, small and local tourism organisations and firms can enlarge their markets or operate in niche markets by serving a specific group of customers. Against this background, the first contribution to this issue by Kourtit, Nijkamp, van Leeuwen and Bruinsma aims to provide a general overview of experiences and findings that address the socio-economic impacts of e-services on the (cultural) tourist industry. The focus of the subsequent contributions is more applied in nature and shows an interesting diversity, though clearly some important features and concepts are present in all of them. These are in particular: the carrying capacity of an area, the tourist destination image, and the encounter between hosts and visitors.

First of all, in order to be sustainable, the carrying capacity of areas such as nature parks or coastal areas needs to be taken into account. An important aspect of sustainable tourism activities is related to the impact of the activities on the host community and environment. This depends on both the volume and the characteristics of tourists. The 'carrying capacity' issue is very much the subject of the former, while 'visitor quality' is the subject of the latter. The contribution of Rahman and Daud in the present special issue deals with the profile of consumers according to their travel motivation. In addition, the authors aim to select the best segment/segments on which the operators of Taman Negara Park in Malaysia should concentrate their marketing activities. The recognition that nature travel is the fastest growing sector of the tourism business in certain countries has led to many protected areas being increasingly developed and marketed. While this approach helps in generating revenues, raising employment, and improving the local infrastructure, more often than not development is rushed, taking little or no consideration of the product's life cycle or the environment.

Also in Southern European countries, maintaining sustainable landscapes is very important for the tourism industry. Preventing land-use degradation and environmental change is relevant for maintaining tourism as an efficient industry. This holds in particular for coastal zones where land is often scarce and where ecosystems are relatively vulnerable. The Algarve in Southern Portugal is a good example of a coastal zone with both urban and tourism pressure, as described by Vaz, Nainggolan, Nijkamp and Painho. Here, a combination of social, economic and natural factors calls for the application of a complex systems approach, in which GIS is used as a tool to take into account spatio-temporal dynamics. It clearly shows that by considering the economic benefits of the tourist industries, the scarcity resulting from its impact on the carrying capacity calls for a new interpretation of economic opportunities.

Secondly, an important aspect of sustainable and cultural tourism is the interaction between the hosts and the visitors and the competition for resources. Apart from having an impact on the environment of the host community, tourists also interact with the local population. As a consequence, the local population may enter into a kind of competition

with the tourists, while conflicts may arise between groups of residents, for example, between supporters and opponents of tourism. To be sustainable, Bimonte and Punzo state that a tourism-driven development path has to guarantee both a sustainable use of local resources and to minimise potential conflicts between hosts and guests, as well as between different groups of hosts. In their paper, they study the relationship between economic dependence on tourism and a person's attitude toward it in order to investigate whether there could be a potential ground for conflicts between different groups of residents in five Tuscan communities. The results show little conflicts among residents, but give some interesting thoughts for future policies.

Thirdly, an important notion is the necessity of a strong and positive destination image to attract visitors. Increasingly, cultural heritage and cultural events such as music or film festivals are seen as important factors affecting this image. According to the literature on tourism, cultural heritage will increasingly become a tool to positively affect the destination image of a city. This is partly because of the growing competition in the tourism industry and the importance for a city to distinguish itself. At the same time, as the tourist population tends to become older, there will be a growing number of cultural heritage interested visitors. In order to spread tourists more equally over a city, ICT or e-services can be a useful tool to attract them to other, less well-known, interesting (cultural heritage) sights. van Leeuwen and Nijkamp address in their contribution the relevance of e-services in urban cultural tourism and their usefulness in attracting new visitors. Their aim is to map out the different drivers of visitors of cultural heritage in cities together with their preferences for modern e-services in three case-study cities: Amsterdam, Leipzig and Genoa. Statistical results from discrete choice models and factor analyses indicate that the group of visitors mostly attracted to cultural heritage, the 'cultural heritage enthusiasts', are often international tourists. This stresses the importance of multilingual e-services in order to maximise the impact in a certain city.

Another kind of tourism that positively affects the destination image of a city are events. According to Carneiro, Eusébio and Pelicano, who focus on expenditures of music festival visitors, events may help in promoting some regions and by doing so increase market awareness about these regions. In addition, events may extend the visitors' stay in the host region and contribute to increase visitors' expenditures. By studying two music festivals that took place in Portugal – The Super Bock Super Rock (SBSR) Festival and the Southwest (SW) Festival – the authors aim to identify the small and bigger spenders, to understand their characteristics and to formulate strategies that may be used to attract the bigger spenders.

Also, Kostopoulou and Kalogirou state that cultural events, such as festivals, are often one of the main motivations to choose for a certain cultural tourism destination. It often has an important positive effect on the image of the city in which the event is organised. However, it is often not clear how (economic) benefits spread out over the area of the hosting city. Therefore, Kostopoulou and Kalogirou focus on the spatial range of the direct economic impact of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival to the leisure and entertainment hubs of the city.

Finally, the contribution of Rátz and Michalkó, deals with the contribution of tourism to well-being and welfare in Hungary. Based on two national surveys, the authors focus on the contribution of recreational activities to a person's quality of life. Although, in general, motivation, leisure time and interest in travelling affect the chance of participating in tourism activities, in Hungary the disposable income seems to be of

utmost importance. Furthermore, the authors see a strong variation of travel propensity among different age groups. Therefore, they focus on the relationship between personal tourist activities, financial situation, age and satisfaction with life. They find a clear connection between higher perceived well-being and a more active participation in tourism. However, the complexity of the assessed relationships makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the cause-effect relationships.

The various contributions in this issue show that tourism research has reached a state of maturity, both methodologically and empirically. It is a great example of promising multidisciplinary research and will be of great help for effective strategic policy analysis in the increasingly important tourism sector.