Editorial

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Biographical notes: Li Yang is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Western Michigan University. She has interests in tourism planning, cultural tourism, ethnic/indigenous tourism, and tourism analysis and forecasting. She has published papers in various international tourism journals including *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, *Current Issues in Tourism* and *Tourism Geographies*.

Tourism is flourishing rapidly and has become one of the leading economic sectors in the world. It not only offers employment and economic opportunities but also becomes a powerful force to strengthen the identity of host populations and contributes to a broader cultural understanding by creating awareness, respecting the diversity of cultures and ways of life. Meanwhile, the enormous increase in domestic and international travel in recent decades has stimulated a strong interest in local and foreign culture and heritage. Cultural diversity has become a driving force of development, not only in respect of economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling tourism experience. Cultural diversity provides a wide range of distinctive tourism products that provide diverse experiences through contact with new cultures. As demand for cultural tourism products increases, potential opportunities for economic development, local entrepreneurship and empowerment are created.

However, while the promotion of cultural diversity has the potential to bring economic and social benefits, it can also adversely impact traditional culture and the sense of identity of host communities. As culture is increasingly being sought and exploited as a tourism commodity, numerous issues have emerged in many destinations. Authenticity, commodification, sustainability, ownership, power and host-guest relations are some of the issues that researchers, the authorities, commercial interests and cultural owners have struggled with in recent decades. There is growing concern in many countries about how to balance the use of culture as a tourist attraction with the protection of local culture and the promotion of development. Many scholars have urged that if tourism is to be sustained, it will have to be developed in harmony with community interests and protect and preserve traditional cultures, fostering sensitivity to and appreciation for cultural practices (Moscardo and Pearce, 1999; Oakes, 1998; Yang and Wall, 2009).

This special issue of the *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology* is devoted to cultural tourism development. The issue encourages an engagement with ethnicity, identity and culture in the context of tourism policy, theory and practice. It scrutinises

problems and debates resulting from the interrelationships among cultural diversity, tourism, and development, and then challenges all participants in the debate to look at new ideas and consider alternative solutions. Five papers in this special issue cover a variety of important problems and issues associated with culture, tourism and development. In each of the papers there is something new and stimulating for tourism scholars, in terms of theories, methods, perspectives or content.

The article by Canziani presents a process model of cultural commoditisation in tourist destinations and explores the role of hosts and others in determining the outputs of that process. In this article, the commoditisation process is depicted as a model where inputs of cultural markers progress through various transformations into an output product: a marketable cultural profile of the destination that can be promoted and that will have significant appeal to tourists. The author proposes nine theoretical propositions for how the commoditisation process impacts cultural identity within a tourist setting and examines how cultural inputs are selected for tourism exploitation and how these inputs subsequently undergo various transformative sub-processes of commoditisation. Future research is needed to explore the implications of the various sub-processes depicted in the model.

In an ethnographic study, Grydehøj analyses cultural conflicts and integrated tourism policy in Shetland, UK. The integration of tourism promotion into wider economic development policy used by the municipal authority of Shetland (Scotland) has conflicted with local identity, discouraged community engagement with tourism and heritage development, and clashed with the tourism promotion's wider aim attracting immigrants. This study highlights the concerns on the effectiveness and appropriateness of moving tourism promotion too far in the direction of paradiplomacy without real focus on the desires of the local community.

The article by Davis reports origins and growth of the ecomuseum movement in France. Using selected examples of ecomuseums in the Vendée, the Cévennes and the Pyrenées, the paper reflects on recent changes of ecomuseums and on the ways in which rural France is represented to the visiting public. The study results suggest that although these ecomuseums help to interpret the distinctiveness of particular cultural and semi-natural landscapes, they are problematic because these representations paint an inaccurate vision of rural life in the past and fail to communicate how past land use influences the present-day landscape and economy. However, despite these problems, French ecomuseums express locality, heritage and identity and provides a sense of attachment and belonging to local communities. They have the potential to promote tourism in less visited areas of France and play a role in local economic and social development.

In an exploratory study, Spencer and Glover study local attitudes toward tourism on American Indian Reservations (AIRs). Using intercept surveys of attendees at American Indian wacipis (pow-wows) in South Dakota, USA, the researchers discovered that American Indian respondents were generally less sanguine about tourism on AIRs than non-American Indian respondents. American Indian respondents generally supported tourism on AIRs, but their attitudes toward tourism on AIRs were only weakly related to demographic characteristics and inter-tribal differences in such attitudes existed even among ethnically related Siouan Tribes. Additionally, American Indian respondents could be meaningfully disaggregated according to their attitude composites.

The article by Hakkarainen examines the negotiation of ethnic heritage in context of local ethnic relations in regard of tourism. The paper focuses on Jewish heritage within the frame of ethnic revivalist movement in the former Soviet Union. It examines and compares representation of Jewish heritage in discourses of three local communities of the former Pale of Settlement. The central theme of such discourses is the relationship between host and visitors, and how it produces different attitudes to tourism and different degrees of involvement with it. It is suggested that tourism serves as a metaphor to examine how localities experience processes of globalisation. The paper provides important insights on local perspectives on processes of tourism development, transformation and globalisation.

These studies substantiate the need to continue exploration of culture and tourism development. I would like to thank all the authors as well as the reviewers for their contribution and hope that this special issue will further stimulate the debate on cultural tourism.

References

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