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## **Editorial**

*Tourism Governance during Public Sector Reform and Financial Uncertainty - How can Destination Management Organisations Adapt?*

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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Constantia Anastasiadou is a Reader in Tourism at Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh UK. She graduated with an Honours degree in Economics from the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece and an MSc and PhD from the Scottish Hotel School, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow UK. Her research interests include: European tourism policy and planning, tourism governance and management structures and customisation processes in heritage and tourism.

Henrik Halkier is a Professor in Tourism Research at Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark. His research experience is primarily related to the role of institutions, discourse and public policy in tourism and regional development. Current research focuses on food tourism, destination management organisations, path dependency and plasticity in destination development, and combinatorial knowledge dynamics. He is currently Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Aalborg University.

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The current trend for decentralisation of tourism policy from the national to the local level coupled with public sector reforms and expenditure cuts are transforming tourism governance arrangements. Destination management organisations (DMOs) are experiencing resource constraints at a time when they are increasingly expected to create and lead on added value initiatives and make up the shortfall in public funding through product innovation and other means. These changes in the policy environment precipitate a fresh perspective on destination management and necessitate the reconfiguration of relationships with other actors in the tourism policy networks. However, there is evidence (Halkier, 2014; Coles et al., 2014; Slocum and Everett, 2014) that localist interests tend to dominate tourism-related policy networks and that the rescaling and reconfiguration of tourism structures adds further complexity, and thus uncertainty, in the tourism system. The purpose of the special issue is to map out the experience of different destinations by posing the following questions: How has public sector reform affected tourism policymaking and implementation at the destination level? How has the reconfiguration of policy at the local level influenced the roles, functions and performance of DMOs?

Where does better practice exist in stakeholder engagement, leadership and financing of destination level organisations?

This special issue includes contributions that adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to bring together researchers from tourism, economics, geography, public administration and policy, regional studies, and organisational studies.

The first article in this collection by Amore and Hall, explains how the global financial crisis 2008 and earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 led to profound public sector reforms that have affected urban DMOs in Christchurch New Zealand. The paper shows how top-down practices of tourism policy embedded in a hyper-neoliberal doctrine have been utilised in New Zealand and Christchurch as the main response to crisis and recovery creating a democratic vacuum at the expense of the local community.

The second article in this collection by Chaperon, discusses the background to the establishment of a public private partnership DMO on the British island of Jersey in the period 2006 to 2012 when public sector arrangements for tourism were experiencing profound changes across the UK. She argues that the small island polities have affected they dynamics of implementation of the private public partnership – in particular, the private sector unwillingness to implement a model of partnership that does not acknowledge islandness.

The third article by Chim-Miki, Gândara and Batista-Canino focuses on the collaborative network organisation in the city of Foz de Iguazu city, located in the three-border zone of Brazil-Argentina-Uruguay. Tourism governance at this destination shows a degree of advanced consolidation, with wide participation of the public, private and including participants of the three bordering countries. They examined how the process of participatory planning increasing value was co-created for the stakeholders that are organised in the local collaborative network organisation. They argued that tourism destination management in Foz do Iguazu City is propelling the value networking, contributing to innovation and the strategic positioning of the destination, so it acts as a facilitator to value co-creation.

The fourth article by Sheppard and Williams takes a longitudinal approach to examine how three interconnected critical events affected governance processes and priorities, as well as the overall resilience of its sustainability-oriented governance system in Whistler resort in Canada. Their findings highlight that while the governance system's shorter-term priorities were significantly altered by these events, its long-term sustainability goals and objectives remained intact. The findings also emphasise the need to embed flexibility into the interpretation of sustainability's short and long-term priorities and the importance of succession planning for ongoing sustainability progress.

It is our hope that this special issue will stimulate further discussion on the transformation of tourism governance arrangements and the adaptation that tourism destinations are experiencing. The special issue highlights the application of new approaches, theories and methods in the study of local governance arrangements. Two points in particular would appear to be salient. On the one hand, the importance of sudden change ('shocks'), whether in the form of abrupt changes in government philosophy or the need to respond to natural disasters or economic crises, highlights the significance of being able to account for destination development in ways that are different from the gradual progress along a Butlerian curve. On the other hand, the special issue also highlights the importance of long-term continuity in tourist destinations, whether because of reliance on particular markets or the prevalence of national conditions of destination governance. Taken together these two observations

highlight the importance of focusing on the politics of tourism policy in the full sense of the words: accounting not only for aims and methods of individual initiatives and the way policymakers and stakeholders engage with the perceived challenges of their destination – but also for the wider political context and socio-economic trends that shape the local strategies and outcomes. This requires analytical approaches that are able to account for both underlying continuities and are able to acknowledge sudden change when it has a significant impact – and discard it as minor ripples when not. The contributions to this special hopefully make a convincing case for broadening the approaches we bring to bear when trying to understand new trends in tourism policy in a period where the visitor economy is becoming an ever more important – and also challenged – part of global development.

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