

# TDM

## INSIGHTS

TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS



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Creative Tourism in **Bali's** Rural Communities **19**

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## Colophon

“TDM Insights” is an online journal that has discussions and columns on the topic of Tourism Destination Management. The journal is founded by NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, on behalf of their Master of Arts program in Tourism Destination Management (TDM). It is based on the contributions by TDM alumni, NHTV lecturers and other academics and practitioners who provide academic and practical insights on various topics of interest.

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# Educating the world of tourism

## Introduction by the Tourism Destination Management team

Dear readers,

It is our pleasure to present the first issue of our journal *Tourism Destination Management Insights* to you.

Operating in a complex globalized world, tourism destinations are continuously challenged to adapt to contextual change and improve their local performance. Managing tourism destinations has become a professional field of expertise and knowledge and skills are required to establish professional interventions, together with different actors, delivering the tourism experience at the destination level.

NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, with more than 7.700 students in undergraduate and postgraduate courses, has the charm of being a relatively small, independent, government accredited university of applied sciences in the Dutch landscape of higher education. The institute can claim to be one of the biggest specialized tourism institutions in the world. Our tourism programme has obtained the UNWTO TEDQUAL certification, and NHTV is a permanent member of the Educational Council of the same World Tourism Organization. Building on 50 years of tradition in tourism education and research, NHTV has managed to establish and maintain an extensive international network with the tourism industry and with a large number of prestigious tourism education centres all over the world.

This journal presents the highlights of our graduate research, part of the Master of Arts (MA) programme in Tourism Destination Management. The tourism industry continues to be one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. With this growth, there is also an increasing demand for international scholars, researchers, business managers and other professionals. Our Master programme is developed to cater to this demand.

As part of our one-year post-graduate program, our students conduct tourism research at a destination. They bring forward research outcomes and deliver insights into the world of tourism destination management in an in-depth, dedicated and often inspiring manner.

This journal provides valuable information that may contribute to the future development of tourism destinations worldwide. This is the reason to publish student's research output and we consider this first issue a modest step in achieving this goal.

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# Creating superb tourism experiences that improve local quality of life

## Introduction by the editors

Dear readers,

At NHTV, a unique approach to destination management is taught, researched, and practiced in external projects. This approach involves engaging diverse stakeholder groups to reveal the character of a place and determine the local society's direction, leading to superb tourism experiences that improve local quality of life for decades, not a short-term money grab. It was long a dream to create our own useful and rigorous publication outlet on this approach, partly based on the work of our best Master students, and with the present inaugural issue of *Tourism Destination Management Insights*, that dream is coming true.

In this issue, we situate the diversity of stakeholders within three promising destination development processes: eco-tourism development in the Solomon Islands, creative tourism development in Bali; and online experiential marketing of Europe to young Canadians. Both the original thesis studies and the professional and academic responses highlight the importance of big-picture thinking, that is, reconsidering established approaches to bring in previously neglected stakeholder groups and contextual aspects. For example, even if the Solomon Islands feature sustainable tourism operations on-site, the sustainability of transport for tourists to get there must be considered. In Bali, dreams about optimal levels of tourism development diverge, necessitating a careful balancing act. When it comes to marketing Europe, the experiential approach proves that marketing and product go hand-in-hand. On a scale as large as Europe, the diversity of the product itself is actually a part of its appeal.

A few relevant columns related to contemporary trends, namely city marketing and the sharing economy, round out the present issue. Finally, we tell the story of a recent external project that illustrates the abilities of our Master graduates as well as the strength of our multi-stakeholder approach. In this project we studied the visitor experience at museums and heritage sites related to a European treasure, the painter Vincent van Gogh, to explore possibilities of cross-selling to art lovers.

We hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue, and of course look forward to your possible feedback, column submissions, and requests for proposals in destination management.

Sincerely,

The editors

Dr. Jeroen Klijs (lead)  
Dr. Celiane Camargo-Borges  
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# Ecotourism – a suitable tourism development strategy for the Solomon Islands?

## Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide and therefore plays an important role in the economy of most countries. This sector is often regarded as a driver of economic growth in many developing countries, which have limited growth options in other sectors (Scheyvens & Russell, 2009). However, mass tourism and rapid tourism development have often led to negative impact on the environment and culture of tourist destinations. Rapid development of tourism has resulted in environmental and social problems, such as noise, water pollution, biodiversity loss, draining of wetlands, destruction of coral reefs, impacts on the host community, etc. (Das & Chatterjee, 2015; Inskip, 1991; Marschall, 2011). Hence, the question arises how tourism in developing countries should be developed to prevent or reduce negative impacts.

Ecotourism is an alternative tourism approach that has the goal of conserving the environment, while bringing economic benefits to inhabitants (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2012). Ecotourism has the potential to contribute, or already has contributed, to the socio-economic development of less developed countries, especially in Small Island Developing States (Das & Chatterjee, 2015; Gibson, 2010; Hollinshead, 2004; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Ross (2012) mentions that in resource-based developing countries, ecotourism may also contribute to rural development by strengthening fragile local businesses. Ecotourism has, however, also been criticised due its occasional lack of success and sometimes only limited contribution to economic improvement. Hence, how can ecotourism be successful?

The thesis research which is the basis for this paper focused on the Solomon Islands, which belongs to the Small Island Developing States (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015). It is currently facing several challenges to develop and at the same time suffers from environmental degradation, due to the practices of logging, mining and overfishing (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] Factbook, 2015; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, 2014). As these are declining industries, alternative industries have to be found. Tourism in Solomon Islands is in its infancy, small in scale and - compared to other South Pacific countries - low in tourism arrival numbers (South Pacific Tourism Organization, 2015). Only relatively little research has been conducted about tourism in Solomon Islands.

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The goal of the thesis research was:

*To identify if ecotourism is a suitable tourism development strategy for the Solomon Islands, and if so, what would be needed to make it successful.*

## Methods

The research design was of exploratory nature and consisted of various research methods: Secondary research was based on desk research, such as journal articles, books, newspaper articles, governmental publications, tourism strategic plans, NGO reports and statistics. Primary research consisted of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and unstructured participant and non-participant observation. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the public and private sectors, accommodation providers, local communities and tourists. Especially in the primary research, a pragmatic approach had to be employed, as theory and practice are often very different (Bailey, 2007), and the exploratory nature of the research meant that flexibility was required throughout the whole research process (Brown, 2006).

## Findings and discussion

Solomon Islands is not a mass tourism destination and should not become one. It is suggested by this research that ecotourism does, indeed, represent a suitable tourism development strategy for the country, even though it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. That is, it may not be a suitable development approach for all communities, especially those which are very difficult to access. The research resulted in a list of key factors needed to make ecotourism successful on Solomon Islands.

Ecotourism is only one of many definitions of alternative tourism. Alternative are sustainable tourism, ecotourism and nature tourism. Dolnicar, Crouch, and Long (2008, p. 105) argue that “without agreement on the definition of ecotourism and the Eco tourist we will continue to produce knowledge that, rather than being pieces of a puzzle, are pieces of different puzzles, thus preventing the full ecotourism picture to be visible’. In the end, however, what re-

ally matters is that the definitions and ideas of those types of tourism are put into practice and do not just remain concepts. The need for 'A clear definition of ecotourism' is therefore translated into the need for national standards and the establishment of criteria for eco-labelling and certification (Amacher, Koskella, & Ollikainen, 2004; Das & Chatterjee, 2015; Haaland & Aas, 2010; Rio & Nues, 2012; Tepelus & Cordoba, 2005). Tourism businesses that meet the eco standards would receive the eco-labelling and certification. This would ensure that they follow and abide by eco standards. At the same time, the operators would also benefit, as they can use it as a marketing tool.

One criticism of ecotourism is that often the more powerful people within a community are the ones that benefit from tourism development (Farrelly, 2011; Litka, 2013). McCool (2015, p 280) states that "the homogeneity of small villages implicit in many development initiatives are often exposed to rancour, jealousies and conflict introduced by the perceived inequities in resulting incomes and opportunities". In this research it was found that jealousy existed in communities, especially if they saw that one person got more benefits than others. Hence, it is important that

the community can see the benefits and that the tourism operators try to involve the community in hosting tourists. Ecotourism can provide economic incentives for the community and improve living standards, such as sanitation, water tanks, plumbing, health services, school education, etc. It is conceivable that a village entry fee, visitor's tax and/or a community fund could ensure that. Furthermore, the key to success of ecotourism is to involve the local community in the entire process from ecotourism planning to execution and monitoring (Rowat & Engelhardt, 2007; Stone et al., 2008).

Another criticism of ecotourism is that it is a "social trap" for communities as it might lead to promises in the short term, but might cause disadvantages in the long term (McCool, 2015, p. 276; Costanza, 1987; Platt, 1973). Hence, high promises about ecotourism should not be made. Awareness should be created that, for instance, tourism might only develop slowly and that benefits can only be seen in the long term. In addition, communities should be encouraged to continue with their usual occupation. Ecotourism should be seen as an additional income source to cover expenses such as school fees, books or improving public

### Government commitment

- Provide sufficient resources for tourism development
- Guidance through training and awareness

### Resolving the issues of land disputes

- Provide a land register and address system

### Funding

- Ensure the viability of the ecotourism project
- Cooperation between government and banks to provide microcredits

### Training and awareness

- Hospitality training and business management
- Tourism and hospitality college

### A clear definition of ecotourism

- National standards for ecotourism should be provided
- Criteria for eco-lables, certification and licencing

### Infrastructure

- Renegotiate land issues for reopening airports by compensation
- Cooperation with other tourism operators for shared transportation

### Ownership

- Family ownership
- Tourism business provides a % of revenues/visitors' tax to a community fund, which is used to improve public facilities

### Marketing

- Cooperation with other tourism operators
- Official tourism website promotes individual operators

### Product development

- Start with what there is: natural and culture activities, WWII relics, etc.
- Engage visitors with local people through experiencing everyday life

### Improve quality standards

- Quality standards should be established for tourism businesses and accommodations



facilities such as sanitation, church buildings, schools, etc.

For the successful development of ecotourism, it is crucial that tourism stakeholders see the potential and benefits. The thesis research has namely shown that tourism stakeholders have a large influence on shaping tourism development. They are responsible for the tourism product and the image of a destination.

Market research is also an important prerequisite for the successful development of ecotourism. There are more people travelling than ever (UNWTO, 2015) but travellers from some emerging markets, such as China and India, are demanding quantity and cheap travelling. However, travellers from other countries are willing to spend more money on eco-friendly practises and are also looking for new destinations (Blangy & Mehta, 2006; Das, 2011; Dolnicar, Yanamandram & Juvan, 2013). Market research is crucial in order to find out what different types of travellers are looking for and if there is potential for a new niche market. More people are e.g. willing to spend money on environmental friendly products, organic food, etc. (Blangy & Mehta, 2006; Das, 2011; Dolnicar et al., 2013).

Barriers for the implementation of ecotourism might be to convince all tourism stakeholders to agree to sustainable practices. In the beginning it might be more cost intensive and time consuming, as investment in sustainable practices, such as waste separation, alternative energy sources, awareness and training of employees and partners will be necessary. However, in the long run returns will come, as it can be one way to differentiate Solomon Islands from other destinations.

Tourism on Solomon Islands until now rarely had any negative impacts on the environment and the local community. However, to ensure this in the future conservation of the environment, involvement of the community and all stakeholders has to be a priority. The country needs to understand why tourism is growing and that everyone should try to work in one direction. Solomon Islands needs to accentuate its differences with other South Pacific islands, and focus on its niche markets, such as ecotourism. Solomon Islands is just one example of a Small Island Developing State or developing country that has potential for ecotourism.

In developing ecotourism destinations should be aware that ecotourism can be regarded as a micro solution to a macro problem (Wheeller, 1991). Even if it is not possible to achieve the goals of ecotourism fully or to solve the underlying problems, the aim should be to aim for improvement. The vital question is what can be done for more local communities to share the benefits of tourism - increasing their basic living standards and at the same time conserving the environment. Ecotourism has big potential for sustainable success in Solomon Islands and other countries, provided governments and stakeholders recognize and share this vision, and commit themselves to their role in its development.

# “Last chance to see the Solomon Islands?”

## Response to Marlies Haider

Tourism research is a bizarre, often opportunistic phenomenon. New research themes suddenly pop up, frequently sparked by an event or media attention. Few years, several articles, theses, and two edited volumes later, the topic again vanishes. A couple of years ago, ‘last chance tourism’ was such a topic, and I hereby plead guilty in contributing a co-authored book chapter to it (Lamers, Eijgelaar, & Amelung, 2012). In the wake of some tour operators urging consumers to visit destinations like Antarctica, as they might disappear soon (in this case as the result of climate change), last chance tourism was defined as “a niche tourism market where tourists explicitly seek vanishing landscapes or seascapes, and/or disappearing natural and/or social heritage” (Lemelin, Dawson, Stewart, Maher, & Lueck, 2010, p. 478). So, not only tourism research is opportunistic.

Why am I writing this, when Marlies Haider’s thesis is about ecotourism, which has been with us for three decades, and a research topic ever since? Well, the main shortcoming in the way ecotourism is defined and handled, is its sole focus on local or destination sustainability. Global consequences are ignored. Ecotourists are generally well-to-do western folks that need to fly long-haul to get to their ecotourism destination, hence contributing significantly to their personal carbon footprint. A return flight from the Netherlands to the Solomons will easily ‘earn’ you three tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. An average Dutch citizen will have a very hard time producing that amount by a full year of car driving. Actually, it is close to what the average global citizen produces overall in one year.

There are two related reasons why excluding the ‘non-local’ issues are problematic here. First, tourism CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are growing fast, and will eventually ‘clash’ with the goals set in the Paris Agreement on mitigating climate change in 2015. That is bad news for tourism, as the impacts associated with not achieving the Paris target are not in the self-interest of the tourism sector (Scott, Gössling, Hall, & Peeters, 2016). Second, for the Solomon Islands, this is extra painful, as it is one of the states affected by sea-level rise, wherein climate change may play a role (and may do so more in future). Some islands have already disappeared and coastal erosion is predicted to become an extreme problem, possibly leading to relocation of inhabitants (Simon et al., 2016). Is that a stable environment where considerable resources should be used to develop a hitherto virtually non-existing activity which probably contributes to the problem? It is a good example of tourism’s environmental paradox (Williams & Ponsford, 2009).

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Marlies Haider’s thesis is a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of developing ecotourism in the Solomons, with a good emphasis on community involvement. I do not blame Marlies Haider for omitting local and global environmental issues, but rather tourism and tourism educational institutes, who appear to be largely focused on the destination, and on growth. The fact that big players like UNWTO handle tourism as a perfect, almost non-disputed instrument to fight poverty alleviation and aid developing states, notably small island developing states, does not help. I cannot present you with a good economic alternative for the Solomons here, but in view of the above I would argue against developing ‘last chance’ ecotourism to these islands for the moment – to put it a little dramatically. Tourism development today needs more extensive, holistic analyses, including both local and global environmental and societal issues, and ‘no’ should also be an option.

At NHTV’s Centre for Sustainable Tourism and Transport ([www.csst.nl](http://www.csst.nl)), we try take this holistic approach. Our main focus is on knowledge development of tourism’s contribution to climate change, and how to mitigate this. The latter is only possible in absolute terms when tourist behaviour is changed, i.e. less flying and lower distances travelled. Marlies Haider’s thesis issues are closely related to a paper where we analyse the implications of reducing travel distance for least developing countries. We show there will be both winners and losers (also in developed countries), and that there are realistic opportunities for compensating those countries losing out (Peeters & Eijgelaar, 2014).



# Response to Marlies Haider

Eke Eijelaar explored the concept of ecotourism in which Marlies Haider’s thesis is situated. He made the remark that tourism needs a holistic approach and he explained some of the weak points of the ecotourism concept. Furthermore, he pointed out two reasons why excluding ‘non-local’ issues are problematic. Marlies Haider mentioned the necessity to involve the local community in the entire tourism process. She calls for a participative process in developing sustainable tourism. We might say this is reasonable.

But what kind of participation is welcomed in a context where sustainable tourism should be developed? What is the political context? What is the story that locals tell about governance? Participation should be defined before the participants are invited, so all who are involved know their role and scope of action. The participative pyramid is a useful tool to illustrate the degree of participation (cited according to Nöldeke, 2013, based on Arnstein, 1969 and Lüttringhaus, 2003). The pyramid discerns the differing degrees of involvement. A general rule of participation is that those who are concerned are involved. But to what degree should the varied target groups in tourism development be involved? This depends on the political and cultural context and that is defined by a stakeholder analysis. In general, the deeper a target group is concerned, the higher the degree of involvement is required.

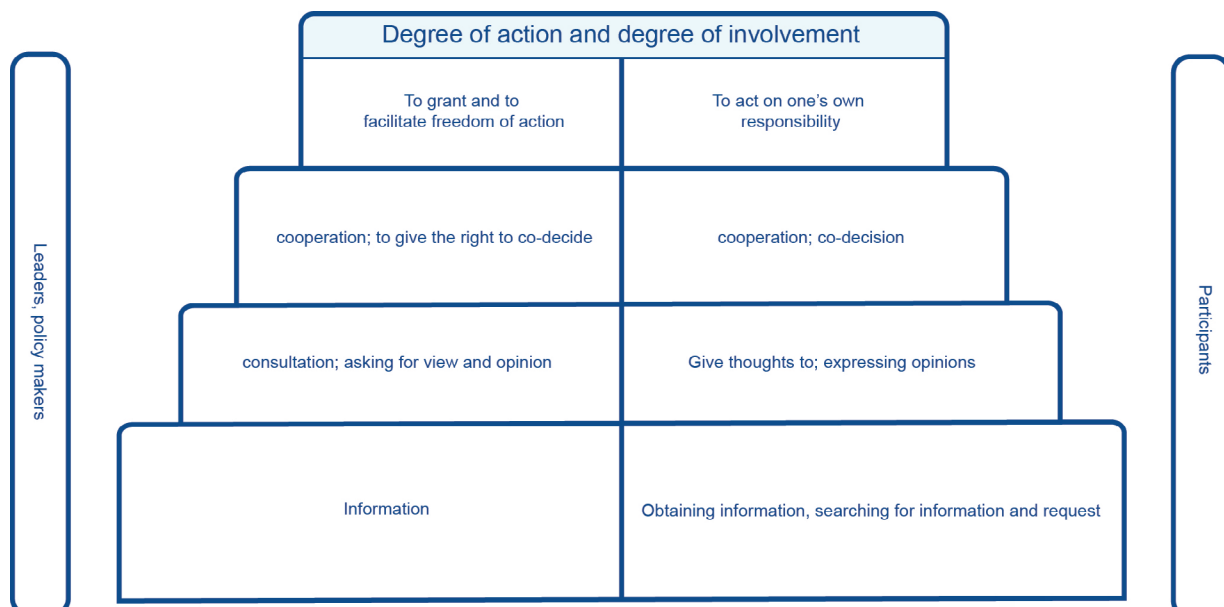
Furthermore, sustainable tourism development is a complex process, that has to be properly managed. Can we use *change management*, a concept that is mainly related to organizations and organizational development, for sustainable tourism? We can learn from change management how we can deal with complexity and change. In her thesis Marlies Haider concludes: “The country needs to understand why tourism is growing and that everyone should try

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to work in one direction”. Vital here is, however, to determine what is meant by “the country”? UNWTO, in the methodology of Sustainable Tourism for development, refers to it as “tourism policy and governance”, implying tourism governance structures, including tourism ministries and institution. Nonetheless, this does not answer the question of who defines the tourism strategy for a specific region, island or country. Change Management enables a transparent process of answering these and other questions. This interactive, process-oriented methodology gathers different perspectives and different answers to open up to a successful dialogue, bringing together multiple voices (Hersted & Gergen, 2013). Regional development Switzerland (Regiosuisse), a participatory program initiated by the Swiss Government, has been using this know-how successfully (Regiosuisse, 2014) by facilitating processes of participation. The inhabitants are invited to create, to talk, and to develop their ideas, as regional development concerns more than governance structures, ministries or institutions. All inhabitants of a region are concerned by their regional development. Furthermore, development has to serve the inhabitants.

By applying Change Management, tourism development becomes a co-creation with shared responsibility. This is most relevant because the tourism product and the image of a destination are public goods.



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# How Silicon Valley hijacked the sharing economy (and how to take it back)

The sharing economy offers us the possibility to build a new economic system of sustainable production and consumption. Yet it has been hijacked by a cult that glorifies disruption, while the actions of major disrupters are exploitative and immoral. We must destroy this cult if we want positive social change.

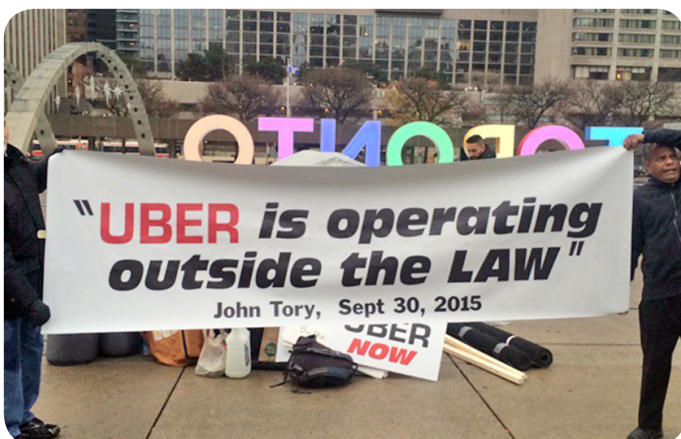
The sharing economy affects everything, including tourism, because it makes people live, love, travel, and do business in different ways. We share houses, partners, rides, and much more, and use the ICT of online platforms to do so. We happily pay a fee for their services, because we often prefer the stuff they let us share to the offer of traditional providers. Hence these platforms increasingly disrupt established service industries, and impact on how tourism destinations develop.

The sharing economy promises positive social change. If we use algorithms to predict production volumes, based on real-time demand, we can use (scarce) resources more effectively and get rid of overproduction. By organizing production and consumption through peer-to-peer exchange, we can empower people and stimulate social cohesion. But above all, if we deploy ICT to share and copy more stuff, we can reduce the labor costs of producing these goods to zero, and erode the price mechanism of mainstream economics. When there is no labor to exploit, we remove the main incentive of capitalist expansion and the corresponding politics of speculation (Marx, 2013). In short, the sharing economy tells us it is possible to abandon capitalism -according to the World Bank (2016) in demise since the 1970s- and build a new system of sustainable production and consumption.

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Yet, this promise has been hijacked. Silicon Valley-based venture capitalists and speculators have bought into the sharing economy to turn online platform start-ups into a new generation of growth-driven multinationals. Their icons Airbnb (2008) and Uber (2009) are currently valued at \$30 billion and \$65.5 billion respectively (Forbes, 2014; n.d.). Despite heavy losses, they keep pouring billion dollar investments in both companies to fuel global expansion. In their wake we find the believers: a mish-mash of hipster entrepreneurs dreaming of becoming the next unicorn, valley-cronies like former EU commissioner Kroes (European Commission, 2014), and politicians in need of stories that restore public faith in business. All of them confuse rapid growth with tangible value, despite lessons of the global financial crisis. And together they are building a cult that glorifies disruption to the point it becomes delusional. This cult preaches how to disrupt, innovate, and be digital. Anyone who follows three basic rules can join: first, only communicate in infographics and simplistic dichotomies; second, build fake authority by claiming you know more about the future than others; and third, declare all the time that everybody must embrace disruption as the new status quo. Want to learn more? Go to the management handbook section in your nearest airport bookstore, or sign up for the next event about innovation in your industry.



While the cult takes bullshit bingo to the next level (Bregman, 2014), its icons are exploitative and immoral. There is nothing social about Airbnb and Uber (Poole, 2016). Neither cares about service quality, because neither is more than a web-shop offering users the chance to sell stuff to each other against a fee and access to their digital identities. Both conveniently linger in legal limbo to externalize the costs of their operations and shift responsibilities to others, from cities that face a surge in illegal rental operations to exploited Uber-drivers (Slee, 2014). But above all, with their clever e-commerce and user-friendly applications they sell the idea of the sharing economy, while in reality they are tearing it apart.

This is why we must act now if we want positive social change. We should realize that Airbnb and Uber do nothing more than spreading empty marketing blabber about the sharing economy's promise to exploit other people's property and labor. Neither creates tangible value beyond bits. Instead, together they symbolize capitalism's final convulsion. Therefore, we must continue to build a system free of exploitation to genuinely enable sustainable production and consumption. In the meanwhile, if you want an easy ride or spend the night in that fabulous loft, go ahead and enjoy. But ask yourself whom you are sharing your data with (ibid). And be on the alert. In Silicon Valley they already know you better than you know yourself, because you have been telling them for years who you are. Therefore, you should ask your government to stop this exploitation by demanding intelligent international legislation. But more than anything else: we must fight the cult together. Because while the next batch of hipster-nerds is pitching their wannabe disruptive business models, the professional bingo players are monopolizing what is really at stake here: control over our digital lives. And only together we can stop them, before it is too late.

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# The application of experiential marketing in destination management

## Recommendations for an integrated e-marketing strategy to promote Europe in Canada

### Introduction

The goal of this thesis research project was to develop ideas for an integrated e-marketing strategy, based on the principles of experiential marketing, to promote Europe on the Canadian outbound market. The research was conducted in cooperation with the European Travel Commission (ETC) and contributes towards the activities of ETC on the Canadian market.

Europe, as one of the leading destinations in the world, is a traditional all-time favourite. However, emerging countries and increasing global competition put great pressure on the continent to maintain and increase visitor numbers and gain access to new source markets. As highlighted by the UNWTO (2015), Europe needs to reposition itself. The image of Europe needs to be refreshed and communicated in an interactive and innovative way, so that its brand can be renewed in the mind of potential visitors.

This study focused on the outbound market of Canada. Canada is one of the main overseas source markets of Europe. In the past decade, however, the number of overnight trips has been continuously declining and Europe was losing Canadian visitors to destinations like Mexico, China, the USA and the Dominican Republic (ETC, 2015). Canada has received significantly less attention in terms of promotional and marketing activities than its „big brother“ the USA, or other larger markets, such as Brazil or China. Despite its smaller size this market has a lot of potential. Canada is ranked 7th on the list of top 10 spending countries in the world and its outbound tourism has grown significantly in the past 10 years (UNWTO, 2015).

This study focussed on the design of an integrated e-marketing strategy and explored the application of experiential marketing. The resulting marketing strategy intends “to provide a competitive edge for Europe on the Canadian market [and to] increase visitation, enhance brand awareness, and destination image by stimulating the senses of potential Canadian visitors and shifting focus towards the experience side of Europe’s tourism supply.

### Methodology

The primary research consists of two parts. Part 1 is a

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netnographic study that formed the qualitative part of the research. Part 2 is based on a quantitative method, namely online self-completion questionnaires. A SWOT analysis was used as a tool to represent the marketing information and data, and to uncover the competitive advantage that a marketing strategy can be built on.

### Findings and discussion

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods led to a complex analysis that formed the basis of a new e-marketing strategy. For this strategy, a new target market is suggested: young Canadian adults between the age of 22 and 35. They represent the new generation of travelers and are the most active online, thus the most receptive to internet marketing. Furthermore, they have sufficient discretionary income to cover their travel costs, prefer multi-country itineraries and are eager to broaden their horizons. As experiential marketing intends to stimulate the senses and touch customers’ hearts, an experiential marketing campaign has great potential in this target group.

A blog analysis showed that backpacking is very popular amongst young Canadians. To capture the attention of this target group, the core message and the new image elements need to be built around a unique selling point that inspires the younger backpacker generation. Europe is one of the most traditional destinations in the world. Its diversity, history, excellent culinary arts, extensive artistic and cultural palette makes it an ideal destination for adventure hungry travelers to discover the old continent and to evoke their inner curiosity. The contrast between the old continent and new generations and the idea how well these two can work together needs to be communicated efficiently.

The conclusion and recommendations made for the marketing strategy integrate five strategic experiential modules (sense, feel, think, act, relate), motivational factors of

visitors (enjoyment and relaxation, discovery of different new places, discovery of new cultures and ways of life, idea of a once in a lifetime experience), image elements (different, unknown, exploration, quality, adventure, excitement etc.) and tourism products (cultural tourism, festival tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, rural tourism etc.) and proposes potential e-marketing tools and channels to reach and inspire young Canadian visitors:

- Social media marketing, including targeted Facebook advertisements as well as 3V (vertical video use) advertising on Snapchat – to distribute creative visual content
- E-WOM; involvement of personal travel sites – to engage potential visitors in communicating and sharing their experiences
- Display advertising with the help of high traffic Canadian travel related websites – to increase the visitation of ETC operated websites and social media platforms
- SEO – to increase the visibility of ETC platforms in Google
- Affiliate marketing – to leverage on the network and customer base of local organizations.
- Cross referencing - to maximise the exposure of the Destination Europe brand and to generate traffic to all ETC operated websites

To successfully implement a new marketing strategy for Europe close cooperation is needed from the 32 national tourism organizations (NTOs) that are members of the ETC and the ETC itself. The development of multi-country

itineraries, thematic trips across European destinations, could be the task of the NTOs. Promotion and marketing of these cross-border tourism packages in Canada would be the responsibility of ETC, being the official organization responsible for promoting Europe as a tourism destination. Efficient cooperation between the member states and ETC should refresh the image of Europe and present it as an exciting destination - while promoting complex experiences to the target market based on the concept of experiential marketing. The promotion of multiple European destinations together is challenging and requires extensive professional work to conduct research, develop package elements, and to build a marketing strategy around it.

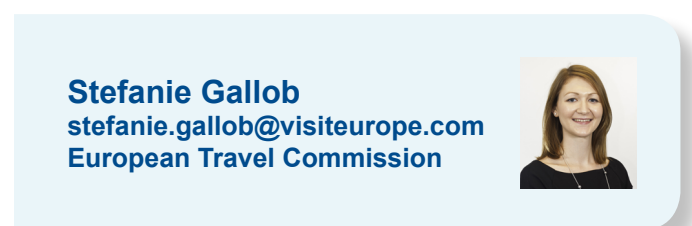
Besides the fact that Europe needs to reposition itself in the battle with upcoming, new destinations, the continent has experienced serious threats and terrorist attacks lately, such as in Paris and Brussels. This has had negative impacts on the tourism industry and the image of Europe. It is thus important to reduce the safety and security concerns and to reassure potential visitors that travelling in Europe is safe. The new marketing strategy would be a great tool to communicate that Europe is still a safe destination full of diversity, culture and history. Using experiential marketing enables the ETC to directly influence feelings and emotions of the target market and create positive perceptions, a feeling of safety and security, and trust that it is most valuable and safe to visit European destinations.

## Response to Bernadett Papp

The European Travel Commission (ETC) would like to thank Bernadett Papp for her valuable contribution aiming at increasing knowledge and driving innovation for the European tourism sector.

The ETC is the non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in third markets. Together with our 32-member National Tourism Organisations, ETC's mission is to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination and to increase competitiveness, through knowledge gathering, sharing amongst members and lobbying, as well as by establishing a professional marketing platform for the successful promotion of member countries in overseas markets. Our four key overseas markets include Brazil, Canada, China and the United States of America.

The gathering of market intelligence and evaluation of key performance indicators are two important pillars of ETC's research activities. The goal of these initiatives is to help the organisation and its members to better understand the business environment, identify new growth opportunities and formulate suitable promotional strategies. Bernadett Papp's Master thesis provided new insights on the Canadian outbound travel market. Amongst our four key mar-



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kets, travel from Canada has been volatile in the past few years. With some forecast 4.6 million Canadian arrivals in Europe in 2016, the market should not be overlooked in formulating Destination Europe's strategy, however.

Following a deep analysis of attitudes towards Europe, Bernadett Papp's thesis provided actionable recommendations on how to market Destination Europe to prospective Canadian travellers. The analysis shed light on undiscovered themes that appeal to the market. Bringing insights and methodology together, the integrated e-marketing strategy structured adequate marketing activities that foremost focused on experience dimensions. With her contribution, Bernadett Papp helped bringing key priorities to ETC's attention that may foster capturing the interest of a new generation of Canadian travellers driven by the unknown, novel and exciting.

# “Europe: A nice old destination?”

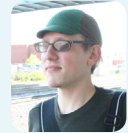
## Response to Bernadett Papp

A few years ago, a seemingly routine KLM flight from Amsterdam to Toronto sold out in less than 15 minutes. The reason behind this crush for tickets was a special occasion for its fleet—the last scheduled passenger flight of the McDonnell Douglas MD-11 airliner. KLM was the last airline to fly the MD-11, and the airplanes served exclusively the Canadian routes, Toronto and Montreal. The odd enthusiasm of aviation fans for this event highlights the opportunities and threats facing Europe as a destination for Canadians that Bernadett Papp has accurately uncovered in her research.

Like the MD-11, Europe is viewed as old and traditional—a sort of “classic” tourist destination. Taking the MD-11’s last flight as an example, however, Europe also offers a rich palette of sensational and emotional experiences to attract the young, passionate members of the 20-35 target market. The recommendations suggest that communicating the sensations and emotions within these experiences over social media and traditional online advertising channels is key to keeping Europe competitive for Canadian tourists of this age.

Without disagreeing with this finding, I would like to shift emphasis from the marketing to the experience product and how it is curated. I think the recommendations may have overestimated the effectiveness of advertising—even person-to-person over social media—to young people anno 2016. While messages communicated over social media based on user-generated content have demonstrably stronger emotional effect on potential customers than traditional advertising, deliberate efforts by destination marketers to harness this power are limited by a larger shift in decision making power from companies to customers. Social media contests and targeted ads do not occur in a vacuum. Moments after seeing these, young Canadians might look at Tripadvisor, online tour agencies (a game Google is ominously entering), weather patterns, and a favorite photography blog, before making a decision. Based on what we know about how decisions form

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(quickly, subconsciously, emotionally), any one of these information sources may have a small shred of content that carries emotional meaning for the particular individual in question. Just like that, a decision to visit or not visit Europe is made.

Marketing is still necessary, but is not enough. Many of the day’s most effective campaigns focus on either “signal boosting” compelling user-generated content—which is frankly dependent on compelling products—or on creating content that is itself an experience, rather than being merely about experience. An example of the latter is the acclaimed video advertising the Munch exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

In this information environment, then, the role of marketing is no longer to persuade, but to trigger awareness and fantasy and let a superior product do the persuasion. Without its meaning and history, the last flight of the MD-11 would not have been such a sales sensation. KLM’s efforts with special livery traveled along user-generated content from aviation fans to set off the feeling that one had to be there, but again, without the history, the special livery would have been a waste of money. Any success Europe has in attracting young Canadians will come from feelings during their actual visits to Europe, something that no advertising can approximate. To add to the recommendations, then, I would suggest that leading European attractions and destinations must measure key experience indicators such as emotions, and the ETC should focus their marketing efforts on sharing of real experiences at the highest-performing and most unique among them.





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# Citymarketing: Is it here to stay?

Many people, including but not limited to politicians, policy makers, advisors and students, are familiar with the term city marketing. Many cities are already 'doing it' or considering taking it up. Critics, however, consider it to be a hype and a rather vague concept. Here we ask ourselves what city marketing is about and whether it here to stay.

City marketing should certainly not be regarded as something new. It already existed in Roman times, except that the Romans did not call it 'city marketing.' Even then cities were busy competing with one another and strengthening themselves. Considered from that perspective, city marketing is here to stay. But of course, the concept does change in meaning over time.

This has certainly happened in the last ten years. Presently, citymarketing is closely linked to concepts such as cooperation and co-creation. Before, it was mostly interpreted as spreading the word about the positive characteristics of a city to the outside world. These activities are much better referred to as 'city promotion'. More cities are now using city marketing more integrally and strategically. These cities are aware of the need to differentiate themselves from other cities. Via differentiation they remain relevant for inhabitants, visitors, and companies. Becoming or remaining attractive for these target groups is a necessity to strengthen the local economy and to safeguard future development. This is the core of city marketing.

Even though there are many cities that have used city marketing to put themselves 'on the map' there are also people that remain skeptical. These people often refer to examples where, in their view, city marketing has been used unsuccessfully. An analysis of these cases shows that one of the main reasons for the failure is that implementation of city marketing has been decided upon within the walls of municipality. But the city does not belong to the municipality! It belongs to everybody: inhabitants, visitors and entrepreneurs. City marketing means cooperating with all relevant actors in the city, creating support and commitment. It is true that the municipality often plays a vital role in city marketing, but cannot and should not attempt to do this on its own.

Places that have created a powerful proposition and successfully 'spread to word' are the city of Eindhoven and the island Goeree Overflakkee (both located in the Netherlands).

Eindhoven has focussed on the core concepts of technology, design and knowledge. This choice has been followed through in many policy domains, related e.g. to the inner city and events. For example, the Dutch Design Week is used to tell to story of Eindhoven to many national and international visitors.

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Goeree Overflakkee has formulated to ambition to become the most sustainable island of Western-Europe. A clear choice! The ambition is visible everywhere; e.g. events are organised in cooperation with Tesla and houses are being build using the newest sustainable technologies. Earlier, Goeree Overflakkee struggled to safeguard an appropriate level of facilities and the inhabitants did not feel connected to the municipality (which used to be split up in four separate municipalities). Now, inhabitants are proud, new companies are being attracted, and the number of inhabitants is increasing again.

City marketing is not only about showing the outside world your positive characteristics. It is about making choices. Choosing your target groups means choosing a proposition that interest these target groups. City marketing is about cooperation, creating support and involvement. Success stories will lead to more cities embracing city marketing. In conclusion, city marketing is a philosophy and way of working that is here to stay!

# Creative tourism in Bali's rural communities

## Introduction

My expectations from the “Island of the gods” were high when I first arrived in Bali for the field research project of the Tourism Destination Management Master Program in 2015. Thus, I was disappointed I was when I realized that Bali, or at least the area in the South around Seminyak, was not the island paradise I imagined. Instead of palm trees, white sandy beaches, lush green rice fields and friendly locals I found foreign-owned designer boutiques, villas inhabited by westerners, overpriced restaurants, dirty beaches, and streets full of crazy motorbike drivers and annoying taxis. Bali's tourism industry has undergone a serious makeover. Over the last decades, tourist numbers increased considerably and cultural tourism transformed into mass tourism. While this development has brought welfare, it also led to a vulnerable economy, over-dependent on tourism, an unequal distribution of income, pollution, commoditization of culture, waste problems, and water scarcity.

I did not give up that easily and started searching for the Bali I had anticipated. Only a few kilometers further north, in the rural areas, I found the island paradise I had imagined: pretty villages with traditional houses, rice paddies and temples at every corner, a relaxed atmosphere, warungs [small local restaurants] serving local food, and very welcoming and warm villagers. I realized how different the two worlds of mass tourism in the South and rural local life in the rest of Bali were. I was determined to contribute to the development of a more culturally and socially responsible form of tourism. Thus, I returned to Bali two months later to write my thesis (Blapp, 2015) in cooperation with the Community-Based Tourism Association Bali (CoBTA).

The CoBTA develops tourism in rural areas, with the goal to improve the welfare of the inhabitants. The organization recommends villages to engage in creative tourism, to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive community-based tourism (CBT) market. CBT aims to involve local communities in tourism development (Hall, 1996), to maximize the benefits for locals (Tolkach et al., 2013), and bring tourists closer to villagers (Butcher, 2003). However, success has been rare and achievements small (Tolkach & King, 2015). Creative tourism is an even more (inter)active successor of cultural tourism (Fernandes, 2011). The evolution from cultural to creative tourism includes a shift from passive to active consumption and from static, tangible heritage to living, intangible culture (Richards, 2011). Thus, instead of just looking at physical heritage like temples, creative tourists seek to engage actively with the culture of destinations (Richards, 2008; Voss, 2004). They wish to ‘live and feel like the locals’ (Ivanova, 2013;

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CTN, 2014) and to have meaningful interactions with the hosts (Richards, 2011). Creative tourism offers the opportunity to participate in a broad array of activities connected to the destination in fields such as music, visual arts, drama, sports, gastronomy, spiritual activities, languages, art-workshops or writing. Interactions between hosts and guests that develop creative potential and new skills are experienced by tourists as well as locals as meaningful.

Creative tourism and community-based tourism have overlapping attributes which complement each other in theory. Both concepts incorporate destination-internal resources, meaningful interaction between hosts and guests, and preservation of natural and cultural heritage. Furthermore, creative tourism seems to provide solutions to three problems of community-based tourism: lack of financial resources, loss of cultural identity and unequal power relations between hosts and guests. These theoretical synergies suggest that creative tourism may lead to tourism which is profitable in the long run, with a socially and culturally responsible outlook. In spite of the advantages which creative tourism seems to bring to communities, it was noted earlier that it could lead to commoditization. Particularly when basing products on the everyday life of locals, there is a fine line between creative tourism resulting in either diversification or serial reproduction. Hence, careful planning is necessary and knowledge required on how to develop creative products in villages without commoditizing the everyday life of locals. However, research of creative tourism has mainly focused on cities in developed countries. Research about creative tourism in rural areas is lacking. My thesis is built on the theoretical overlap between creative tourism and CBT and examined the current offer and future potential of creative tourism in five Balinese villages. I evaluated whether creative tourism is a suitable strategy for rural communities, by elaborating advantages, disadvantages and requirements of a possible merger of creative tourism and CBT. From a practical point of view the objective was to give advice on how to develop creative tourism in a way that is profitably in the long run and with a socially and culturally responsible outlook.

## Methodology

The thesis is based on an ethnographic approach, which enabled me to understand and describe the social worlds



of the Balinese villages (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). I studied locals and tourists to understand how products are developed and implemented. Data were gathered over four weeks, whereby participant observation in five different villages resulted in over 150 pages of computer-written field notes. Additionally, I conducted 11 in-depth interviews with 14 experts and did interviews with 15 tourist groups, totaling 43 participants. I analyzed data with a qualitative content analysis, using a three-step approach suggested by Charmaz (2014): open coding, focused coding and theoretical synthesis.

## Findings and discussion

The analysis reveals four core themes of creative tourism: The everyday life of locals in tourist activities, sharing the everyday life with tourists, meaningful interactions between hosts and guests, and cultural learning experiences for hosts and guests. Based on several positive and negative synergies between creative tourism and CBT, the thesis shows that in sum, creative tourism is a promising concept for villages if certain requirements are fulfilled. The findings partly confirm and extend the theoretical synergies between the two concepts. In total, five positive and one negative synergy between the two concepts are conveyed. Positive synergies mean that the merger of creative tourism and CBT creates an enhanced combined effect while negative synergies stand for a negative combined effect. The positive synergies are intangibility of creative tourism at low financial resources, more enthusiasm of locals to share their culture through creative tourism, preserving cultural heritage through creative learning experiences, more equal power distribution between hosts and guests through creative tourism and creative tourism involving locals without English knowledge. The negative synergy is that intangibility challenges the differentiation and marketing of villages.

Genuine interest in cultural exchange should be the main motivation of tourists and locals to engage in community-based creative tourism. To satisfy this interest a high level of interaction between hosts and guests, a high level of everyday life in the tourism product, and a low level of adaptation of this everyday life are necessary. This implies that locals should be willing to share their everyday life to a certain extent. The more these criteria are met, the more meaningful is the cultural learning experience and the better the genuine interest in cultural exchange for both tourists and hosts. This requires destinations to design their products more spontaneously. Tourism should not become the new everyday life of locals. Instead, their everyday life is the 'tourist attraction' in which guests can be integrated without major adaptations. Tourists need to be flexible, culturally conscious, and interested in participating and interacting.

These insights provide several practical implications for destination managers in Balinese villages and external supporting organizations, but also for villages in other destinations. In terms of destination development, it is recommended to first check, using a list of criteria, whether the vision of the villagers and their resources match the characteristics of community-based creative tourism. Furthermore, the number of tourists per day should be limit-

ed and incomes and jobs in the creative industries should be fostered, instead of fulltime jobs in tourism. In terms of marketing it is suggested to clearly define the target market and to understand its expectations. There should be more focus on free independent travelers, e-commerce and online marketing. Moreover, differentiation could be achieved by emphasizing interaction and local people in the promotion content. For product development the thesis offers an idea catalogue of cultural capital, to be used for creative activities. Specific advice is given on how to develop activities, homestays, eating, and transportation options. Furthermore, it is recommended to not only create packages but offer and price all items individually. External support is recommended for marketing and facilitating interaction between hosts and guests. For the former, umbrella marketing, to promote Bali as a creative tourism destination, and training about online marketing tools are suggested. For the latter, knowledge sharing of Balinese culture as well as training about creative tourism, focusing on the local's role of teacher instead of servant, is advised.

For the visited villages, marketing is the biggest challenge and the highest priority. The villages were all 'ready' to welcome tourists, offering numerous homestays and different activities. However, in some villages there were hardly any tourists and the villagers did not know how to attract them. Other villages had many day tourists but could not prompt them to stay overnight. Whenever I asked members of the tourism committees if they have any questions to me, they generally asked: "Can you tell us how we can get more tourists?" One of the most important causes of this problem is that the destination managers' budget and possibilities in the individual villages are very limited. Therefore, umbrella organizations like the CoBTA are needed to market Bali as a creative tourism destination. Possibilities are to set up a homepage featuring all creative tourism villages, to apply as a Creative Tourism Network member, and to cooperate with the Bali and Indonesian Tourism Board to strengthen the creative tourism brand of Bali.

Even though financial resources and know-how of marketing in the villages is limited there are some tools which can be used, particularly in the field of e-commerce and online marketing. Booking platforms such as i-like local or homestay.com are free to use and target tourists which are interested in creative tourism. Online marketing through Facebook or TripAdvisor can also be implemented with limited resources. The feasibility of applying such tools was shown by some recent developments. After my field research, one village has started to use 'i-like local'. Another village created a new facebook page which is updated at least weekly. On this page, interaction takes place between the villagers, visitors and interested, potential new visitors. These initiatives indicate a positive prospect for a more culturally and socially responsible form of tourism.

# Response to Manuela Blapp

The BALI Community Based Tourism Association (Bali CoBTA) was established 2010 with support from the Minister of Culture and Tourism, the Bali Provincial Tourism Authority and independent contributors (Tourism stakeholders of Bali). Bali CoBTA is a non-profit and non-governmental organization. It promotes responsible and sustainable community-based tourism (CBT) and offers support for the transformation of CBT villages (“Desa Wisata” in Bahasa Indonesia) into ‘*Creative Tourism Villages*’, by establishing a cooperation relationship between interested villages and related stakeholders. These stakeholders include e.g. government tourism authorities, travel agencies, CSR doers, hoteliers, academics (domestic and overseas), and journalists. We always welcome those that are able to assist and facilitate the research and development of “Creative Tourism” by providing volunteers for HR management, training to village residents and by improving the utilization of existing facilities.

In “Creative Tourism Villages” tourists are given a unique opportunity to engage in and experience local culture and community life, while communities earn an additional income and preserve and showcase their environment, culture and heritage.

The thesis of Manuela Blapp is built on the theoretical overlap between creative tourism and CBT and examines the current offer and future potential of creative tourism in the five Balinese Villages. It is an innovative and inspirational piece of research. It shows that creative tourism is a suitable strategy for rural communities and elaborates on advantages, disadvantages and requirements for a merger of creative tourism and CBT. This provides valuable direction for the future activities of Bali CoBTA. The ethnographic approach, that enabled the researcher to understand and describe the social worlds of the Balinese Villages, and the qualitative content analysis, were most valuable in arriving at relevant and practical conclusions and recommendations.

To implement these recommendations there are important questions that remain to be answered, such as how to convince locals to share their everyday life (to a certain extent). The more they are willing to do this, the more meaningful is the cultural learning experience and the better can be the genuine interest in cultural exchange satisfied for both tourists and hosts. Furthermore, it needs to be safeguarded that the number of tourists per day does not surpass the carrying capacity of the villages and that incomes and jobs in the creative industries are fostered. Finally, target markets need to be defined, with realistic expectations, and new products should be developed based e.g. on a catalogue of cultural capital.

CoBTA has the spirit to use this thesis to make a fundamental contribution to the development of Creative Tour-

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ism. A problem, however, is that it does not have funds and ability to manage and maintain the needs, do the marketing activities, and follow up implementation and activities related to the development of CT Villages. Therefore, CoBTA is urgently looking for an expansion of its staff, to materialize the actions as recommended by Manuela Blapp. Since each Village is unique we are looking for a person who is able to identify and propose recommendations about the four core themes of creative tourism (that the analysis reveals) that are authentic and original for each village, including:

- The everyday life of locals in tourism products,
- Sharing the everyday life with tourists,
- Meaningful interactions between hosts and guests, &
- Cultural learning experiences for hosts and guests.

CoBTA is also open to other researchers, that can provide guidance for the development of Creative Tourism Villages, in a way that is profitable in the long run and takes a socially and culturally responsible outlook. Furthermore, CoBTA would like to cooperate with (international) knowledge institutes to further develop the knowledge about Creative Tourism or CBT in Bali. CoBTA is already participating in the STARS Project (Sustainable Tourism Agent in Rural Society) This project was initiated by Erasmus Plus, and is co-funded by the EU countries. The project aims to empower youth in a rural society to get involved in the development of tourism. The goal is to empower youth to earn an income from tourism by, for example, promoting hiking activities whereby the youth will act as the guide.

# “Respecting creativity”

## Response to Manuela Blapp

The thesis of Manuela Blapp is embedded in creative tourism. Contemporary case studies in sustainable tourism (ST) are calling for the importance of new forms of addressing sustainability in tourism (Moscardo 2015). Is creative tourism such a new form or is it merely a marketing concept welcomed by policy makers (Richards & Marques, 2012)? Moscardo pointed out, that tourism is still an economically driven concept with major failures (Moscardo, 2015). Which benefits could come from creative tourism for sustainability and community development when language is action (Bodiford & Camargo-Borges, 2104) and the term creativity would be fully respected and not generally defined as a novel combination of old ideas (Boden, 1994)?

Most people relate creativity to art. So it is not surprising, that the offers in “creative tourism” are art-related events and entertainment. Tourists are invited to visit art exhibitions, concerts or workshops with, for example, an expert who teaches them how to make bouquets of flowers. It is possible to choose between experts who teach us or to be entertained by such artistic events. Art goes further, however.

Art is not reduced to a pre-existing state. Art is free. The process of aesthetic autonomy changes the perspective. It is no longer a mirror of God’s creation or an illustration of religious truth. Art does not have to serve somebody, neither to specific authorities nor to specific systems or

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organizations. Art questions our ordinary understanding and shows its interpretation while art itself is an interpretation (Jacoby, 2004). Art is related to beauty and aesthetic. Aesthetic is derived from the word *aisthesis*, which means “with the senses” —a perception by the senses—in modern Greek. In ancient Greek it means “to breathe.” Beauty can take our breath away. Beauty affects us and touches us. Perceiving and sensing is an active and dynamic process, an active participation and not a passive position. Beuys said “everyone is an artist.” An art-oriented process within the discipline of the arts offers tourists and hosts an active part in an aesthetic and creative process. An aesthetic process opens up new experiences, despite the colour of our skin, our educational background, economical power or academic degree.

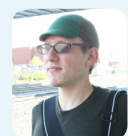
In this interpretation, creative tourism turns to its origins of creativity, art and aesthetics. It can become a community based activity that offers a “play-space” to co-create new meanings and new experiences (Kriz, 2002; Gergen & Gergen, 2004), for Balinese villagers as well as for West-erners.

# “Smart growth or sweet dreams?”

## Response to Manuela Blapp

Since the 1960’s tourism has been written about, from the host perspective, as the imperiled goose that lays the golden egg. From the Golden Hordes to the Irridex and Butler’s Tourism Area Life Cycle, the process described by Manuela Blapp in her disappointment with southern Bali is easily recognizable in early theories of destination development. Hundreds of papers written since then have advanced the same rather pessimistic outlook. Human nature is fundamentally greedy and bad, this literature alleges, and whether it’s local power brokers hungry for income or tourists hungry for social recognition, the golden goose is bound for the chopping block. Soon, a flood of tourists

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is bound to alter the attraction of local culture until it is no longer unique or attractive.

Though there is a lot of evidence supporting this view of



tourism—and of humanity—I find it somewhat cynical and limited in usefulness. If tourism works badly in Southern Bali, where does it work well? That is a true gap in our knowledge. It is commendable that Manuela Blapp sought to address this gap in a practical and realistic way. The optimistic starting point and pragmatic recommendations represent a welcome original attitude toward issues of tourism (over)development that are typically researched just for the sake of lamenting what went wrong. The findings make it bluntly clear what went wrong—too many tourists came. To do it right, the recommendations say, there must be fewer tourists, and therefore also less tourism income. A more diverse economy is required. While bearing bad news for tourism investors and perhaps disappointing some locals, these recommendations are supported not just by the evidence collected, but by common sense.

The question raised by the findings, however, is how this situation may develop over time. Suppose one of the villages studied arrives at the recommended scenario: it is economically diverse, with agrarian and artisan jobs as well as a handful of part-time tourism jobs; a small but steady stream of loyal tourists interested in local culture are inexpensively attracted through social media and spend at least a few nights per visit. Then what? It is wrong to assume that either the local culture or tourists' culture will remain static. As tastes and priorities change both in hosts and guests, under what leadership and principles should the situation evolve?

Social science is probably ill-equipped to address such difficult questions, but it is certainly impossible based on an ethnography of a few months. Recurring panel research that follows selected communities and individuals over years and decades may offer some insights. This expensive sort of research is, thankfully, beginning to appear in the tourism field, though not in the domain of destination management.

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# Van Gogh Europe Project: promoting international tourism, culture and heritage

## Introduction

The following article tells the story of an external project NHTV conducted at museums and heritage sites related to the painter Vincent van Gogh. This research was conducted by TDM Master lecturers Wesley Put and Ondrej Mitas and alumni Joris Dibbits, Sven Freerks and Bernadett Papp, as well as current and former bachelor students Amelie Bouchenot, Cita van den Heuvel, and Joost Heijningen. This project reflects the expertise and attention to detail we take pride in.

The legacy of Vincent van Gogh is enormous. His masterpieces have inspired numerous artists and his role in shaping the world of art is indisputable. In 2012 the Van Gogh heritage locations in France, Belgium and The Netherlands have decided to come together to form an efficient collaboration. The Van Gogh Europe Project was inaugurated after receiving funds from the European Union. The NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences was in charge of conducting extensive market research with the aim of providing market intelligence that serves as a basis for product development, packaging, marketing and promotional strategies and cross-selling of Van Gogh sites.

After having defined eight target markets, secondary research was used to identify main trends in inbound tourism to Belgium, France and the Netherlands. The research continued with in-depth field research focusing on the interests, expectations and experiences of visitors. A three-step approach was used: a large-scale visitor surveys, in-depth interviews with a small sub-sample of the survey respondents, and social media analysis. Field research was conducted in The Netherlands at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and the Vincentre Museum in Nuenen. In Belgium we conducted research at the Maison Van Gogh in Cuesmes. In France we conducted research at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Auberge Ravoux in Auvers-sur-Oise, and at St. Paul-de-Mausole and Musée Estrine in St. Rémy-de-Provence.

We used a systematic diversity sampling approach. Responses were collected at different times of the day, three different days per week, over a period of four weeks. After having collected 1,844 responses the data was analysed in two steps. First, responses were analysed by using descriptive statistics. Second, complex linear models were built to predict relevant behaviour. In parallel with the visitor survey, social media analysis was carried out. For a period of 7 weeks, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and other platforms were monitored to analyse tags, phrases,

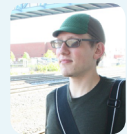
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and visual content linked to Van Gogh and the Van Gogh locations. In total, 32,591 messages were analysed. The last step of the multi-method approach was in-depth interviews. Fifteen interviews were conducted and transcribed. The transcripts were analysed using a deductive coding approach, whereby quotes from the interviews were grouped into pre-determined concepts.

The majority of the survey data were collected at Musée d'Orsay (28.04%) and the Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (40.11%). Most respondents came from the US (22.525), France (16.89%) and The Netherlands (9.09%). The overall sample can best be characterized as young, independent, and well-educated. A large majority, 81.92%, of the respondents organized most of the trip themselves. Of these free independent tourists, 25.73%, travelled with friends and 31.03% as couples without children. These proportions are directly related to the overrepresentation of Generation Y and Baby Boomers in the dataset.

Positive emotions such as interest, joy, positive surprise, inspiration, and fascination were felt strongly by most of the respondents. Visitors that strongly agreed with the following experience elements usually had high intent to recommend: I experienced something unique, I visited a place I really wanted to go, I had an experience which exceeded my expectations, I learned a lot. Overall most

of the respondents were very positive about their visitor experience. "Interest" was rated as the strongest emotion in case of all the locations. Especially Musée d'Orsay was considered as a unique place that visitors had on their bucket lists and as an experience that exceeded their expectations. Interviewees described their visits to Van Gogh sites as fascinating and intensely positive, although they also mentioned there was a lack of information and some confusion. In some cases, signs leading to the attractions were missing as well as information materials, audio guides, and translations, negatively impacting the visitor experience.

In contrast to being very interested in Van Gogh, most of the survey respondents are not familiar with the smaller locations and even if they heard of them, they don't intend to visit these sites in the next two years. An interesting finding was that the level of awareness and knowledge was directly related to the intention to visit other Van Gogh locations in the future. Visitors who had more information about Van Gogh were more likely to visit related sites.

The analysis revealed almost no interest in organized package tours. Travellers prefer to organize the trip themselves. Furthermore, Van Gogh locations are seen as attractions and not as destinations. A visit to a Van Gogh site is often connected to other activities. The social media analysis revealed that the Van Gogh locations were described as the place where the paintings were made, and not as a destination that can or has been visited.

The respondents showed no or minimal interest in long-distance Van Gogh themed tours and would rather visit Van Gogh sites that are located nearby.

The main conclusion is that the level of familiarity with the sites is extremely low. Visitors are aware that the paintings were made at certain locations but they are not aware these places can be visited. The attractions have a substantial responsibility in spreading information about other Van Gogh locations. The Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam and Musée d'Orsay have a vital role: They can increase awareness for the smaller sites. The active online presence of The Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam offers potential for promoting the Van Gogh Europe Network. Tours that combine several cultural attractions (e.g. related to other painters) offer great potential, as most of the respondents were interested in combining visits to Van Gogh locations with other activities.

The research revealed that both online and offline information is crucial. A new and informative website, connecting the locations by providing all the information needed to create an itinerary, is highly recommended. Visualization of the locations and possible routes would make it easier for the visitors to design their own trip. Developing a Van Gogh Europe app is also recommended, as the visitors tend to search for information over mobile internet while on their holiday. Finally, optimal use needs to be made of existing online social media network of signature attractions, such as The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

Besides providing off-site information, on-site information is just as important, including flyers, maps and other

printed materials. Visitor information should be examined critically with attention to translation in several languages, audio guides, signs, information regarding e-tickets, and waiting times.

This research has highlighted important aspects of cultural tourism, specifically the possibility to develop cross-border tourism between European countries. Besides that, the analysis showed that selling Van Gogh themed tours in travel packages is not likely to be successful. Crucial in developing and promoting Van Gogh sites is adapting to the travel behaviour, individual needs, and preferences of travellers and raising knowledge and awareness linked to Van Gogh. Finally, close collaboration between the members of the Van Gogh Europe network is needed for long-term success.



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