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Conference Reports

Cities as Creative Spaces for Cultural Tourism, Istanbul, 19-21 November 2009

The weather was excellent. Well, most of the time. This conference was held at the prestigious Boğaziçi University – overlooking the Bosphorus. Following the inevitable introductory speeches from key officials – a director-general from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a former Minister of Tourism, and the university’s rector – the gathered delegates heard from two of the nine keynote speakers. Professor Jafar Jafari (University of Wisconsin) was followed by Professor Brian Wheeler (University of Tasmania and NHTV Breda); it must be stated that, despite hearing the latter, on innumerable occasions, this was Brian at his very peak. It requires stamina besides intellectual rigour to connect 213 Powerpoint slides (almost all images) in just forty-five minutes. Yes, 213 slides. One of Brian’s many underlying themes was about ‘dressing things up’ and this struck a resonance with local author Orhan Pamuk’s

Figure 1



The Bosphorus from the campus of Boğaziçi University
(Courtesy of conference organisers: Maria Dolores Alvarez, Duygu Salman Öztürk,
Özen Kirant Yozcu)

perception of Istanbul today as being more colourful than in his youth in the 1970s, a time of *huzun* (see <http://www.suite101.com/content/orhan-pamuk-a34080#ixzz167fbrkzU>) – his brother holds a chair in economics at this university.

Figure 2



The irrepressible Professor Brian Wheeler

Around forty delegates delivered papers relating to city image, branding, regeneration, competitiveness and planning. Robert Maitland, professor of city tourism at the University of Westminster, delivered a thought-provoking one entitled 'Everyday life as a creative experience in cities'. Interviewing visitors to Islington and Bankside (London), he showed that for these individuals, the attractiveness of the area lay in their atmosphere and 'apparently mundane elements of vernacular architecture, shops and cafes'. His paper was very much in tune with another of the keynote speakers, Greg Richards (Tilburg University) and his concept of creative cultural tourism. This reporter was frequently reminded of Richards and Wilson's (2006) seminal paper in the journal *Tourism Management*.

Figure 3



Professor Robert Maitland

In their paper Creative tourism in the city: how far can the tourist go?, Duygu Salman and Duygu Uygur reflected on who seeks a creative tourism experience. Some visitors, they believe, want a type of tourism that differentiates them from other tourists because they are about identity construction. “They are after the original not the standard, they are motivated by a need to learn new cultures in every creative way possible, they are open to novel experiences and they are ready to appreciate authentic encounters”; perhaps, I have heard this before, many times. We just did not call these visitors creative travellers before.

A paper I did enjoy was delivered by Bahar Durmaz, Stephen Platt and Tan Yigitcanlar, entitled Creativity, culture and tourism: the case of Istanbul and London film industries. Two case studies contrasted Soho (London) with Beyoglu (Istanbul); it was perceived that enticing creative industry businesses would help restructure Beyoglu and “harness the potential of the place”. Listening to this, I was reminded of Orhan Pamuk’s attempt (successful, I believe) to create a visitor attraction in Beyoglu named The Museum of Innocence – after his novel (<http://www.orhanpamuk.net/book.aspx?id=96&lng=eng>) – is this tourism imitating art?

Figure 4



Professor Greg Richards

This conference was a good introduction to the research currently being undertaken into creative tourism, a form which seems to be more urban in nature than rural although that could be simply due to the papers submitted. Many thanks to Maria Dolores Alvarez and her team for an event that went very smoothly.

References

Richards, G. & Wilson, J. (2006). Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture? In *Tourism Management*, 27, 6, 1209-1223.

Graham Busby, University of Plymouth

**2ICC – Second International Cruise Conference, Plymouth, UK 18 – 20
February 2010**

The Second International Cruise Conference was held in Plymouth, England – or the first Plymouth as Huang *et al* (2009) refer to it. The body of research relating to the cruise industry has grown in recent years and this conference provided a base for an eclectic range of papers. Indeed, it was also the launch pad for the Cruise Research Society, established by Alexis Papathanassis (Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences).

Figure 1



Neal Martin, Carnival UK Director of Product Services

Four keynote speakers illustrated how research on the cruise product has grown in recent years. Firstly, Neal Martin, Carnival UK's director of product services discussed the challenges in turbulent trading conditions. Professor Ross Dowling spoke on the 'explosive growth of cruising down under'; surely, the rate of increase in cruising will not mimic what has been seen in the UK in the last twenty years? Destination Southwest's Bob Harrison spoke on 'how to set up a cruise destination management organisation' and he should certainly know; the organisation has stimulated a dramatic increase in the number of vessels visiting south-west England as ports-of-call. Aiding the consumer for many years now has been the *Berlitz Guide*

to *Cruising* and associated with this publication since inception has been Douglas Ward; his views on ship facilities and ratings are worth listening to. Finally, Flo Powell, from ACE (the Association of Cruise Experts) detailed emerging cruise destinations.

Figure 2



Ross Dowling, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Figure 3



Flo Powell, ACE.

In total, fifteen parallel sessions were operated, covering topics such as human resource management, cruise research *per se* (and rigour with that research), environmental and social responsibility, and product development. The Third such conference, 3ICC, is to be held in Dubrovnik, in May 2011.

References

Huang, R., Busby, G. & Bosdou, C. (2009) The first Plymouth: Pictorial element and destination image. In *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 2 (4) 246-261.

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