



ADVENTURES IN SMALL TOURISM: STUDIES AND STORIES

Edited and with an Introduction by Kathleen Scherf

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INTRODUCTION

Small Tourism: Local, Localism, Neolocal, and a View Toward Regeneration

Kathleen Scherf

The Context for Small

This book is the companion volume to 2021's *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities: Place, Culture, and Local Representation*, also published by the University of Calgary Press. That book offered a variety of authorial perspectives on a central question: In what ways are creativity and place-based tourism co-engaged to aid sustainable cultural development in smaller communities? (Scherf 2021, 3). We defined “creative tourism” as

an experiential subset of cultural tourism that demonstrates four characteristics: 1) it involves the transfer of culture-based, place-specific endogenous knowledge to the visitor; 2) it includes the experiential participation of the visitor in activities that embody such knowledge; 3) it operates in a collaborative paradigm in some manner; and 4) it demonstrates a longer view beyond the actual tourist experience toward the host community's cultural sustainability. (4–5)

Although the current volume does not focus intentionally on only creative tourism, its studies and stories of small tourism enterprises, located in small communities, and offered to small groups of visitors, almost universally echo the characteristics of creative tourism. The appeal and advantages of small tourism speak to the nature of creative tourism: experiencing the

unique attributes of a circumscribed destination, taking part in local traditions and activities, engaging visitors with residents, and revitalizing or sustaining a community's tangible and intangible cultural assets. The ten studies in *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities* offered two basic approaches to the question the volume posed. First, authors emphasized the importance of community- and culture-led planning in developing successful and sustainable creative tourism enterprises. Second, they argued that the creative representation of place through tourism could develop cultural capital for the host community.

In his conclusion to that volume, Greg Richards spoke of the ability of smaller places to engage in the collaborative identification and expression of cultural assets to provide a sense of place for visitors, as well as for residents. The analyses in the volume revealed five interrelated circumstances that, when present in a smaller community, could provide a favourable climate in which the combined interests of tourism and local sustainability could thrive. First, the community must recognize that its attraction to tourists depends on its cultural assets, those tangible and intangible characteristics that make the place uniquely itself. Second, those assets should be identified through a collaborative, community-led process of cultural mapping, engaging all willing residents and incorporating their various perspectives on how their place is best and most authentically represented. Third, the host community should support or develop cultural networks or clusters, leveraging extant cultural capacity and mitigating the lack of density in smaller communities. Fourth, the positive relationship between visitors and residents must be prioritized. Residents are community stakeholders, but visitors, when they want to engage with the everyday life of a place, are also community stakeholders—in a way, they are temporary residents. As Greg Richards has commented in many of his articles and presentations, locals and visitors co-create place. Visitors wishing to experience the authenticity of a particular place, or communities wishing to help sustain their culture through tourism, will both be sorely disappointed if a negative relationship exists between locals and visitors. The cultural failure of mass tourism bears ample witness to this fact. Fifth and finally, and again with reference to mass tourism, tourism can best assist a community's sustainable cultural development and social inclusion if visitors willingly recognize their agency as contributors to a destination's cultural sustainability. Where co-creation of place exists, where tourism is beneficial to a community, the authors of *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities* argue

that a collaborative paradigm for tourism is not only about local clusters and networks, but also about the community and the visitor. As the introduction to that volume concludes,

This may require a new mindset for being a *visitor*. Tucking into a local culture in this way as a visitor can only happen when the participative arena is manageable—or, put another way, when it is small. As the tourism industry struggles to recover from calamitous reality of *Coronazeit*, we might find that small is the new big. (23)

And that is the point at which we begin the present consideration of small tourism in small places. More specifically, we aim to explore the opportunities and issues faced by providers of creative tourism experiences, and especially by micro-enterprises (defined below) to a small number of participants (in this volume, we define that as under twenty-five), in a tightly defined geographical place.

Small Places, Small Enterprises, Small Numbers

This volume presents both academic studies and personal stories about small tourism. Rather than separating the two approaches by type, I have categorized them thematically, presenting first a study, and then a story that exemplifies and provides an example of some of the concepts discussed in its matching study. As such, I hope the volume is interesting to students and practitioners interested in contemporary tourism issues. I will introduce the chapters shortly, but first some discussion of small tourism in the context of this book.

Small tourism is hardly a new phenomenon. Retreats of various sorts, safaris, voluntourism, and genealogical tourism are all examples that, while perhaps not always creative, generally involve small numbers of tourists. And alternative approaches to tourism have certainly been informed by reactions against the over-tourism much analyzed since the 1970s. Over-tourism is poignantly demonstrated in international cities like Amsterdam and Barcelona, where local tourism councils have developed plans to decentralize the physical impact of visitors in their respective central cores, and where the overwhelming number of visitors have had a hand in *barriocide*, or the death of neighbourhoods, to which residents often react negatively.

Over-tourism wreaks havoc on both physical and cultural sustainability, as *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities* discussed. The sustainability of physical infrastructures can be threatened by mass tourism. A huge issue is the ability of locals to live in their neighbourhoods, as the experience of Barcelona's Gràcia neighbourhood shows. Local tenants can sometimes no longer afford to live in their community, as landlords may prefer to use their buildings to provide relatively expensive short-term accommodation for tourists, thus both increasing costs and decreasing housing stock for residents. Aside from housing issues, mass tourism can also stress municipal infrastructures in central districts, which are often tourist zones. This situation is well-documented in municipal tourism plans and in tourism studies, but it is also perfectly visible to the untrained eye. For example, one Sunday morning in the winter of 2017, when I was coming down the hill in an empty bus from Barcelona's El Carmelo neighbourhood, the bus, halting at Tirso/Pl Laguna Lanau, a stop for Gaudi's Parc Güell, became suddenly engorged with tourists descending toward central Barcelona. Filled to capacity, the bus could not even admit all those lined up, nor could it stop for residents as it proceeded on its route. At the next few stops, ebony- and lace-clad elderly local ladies, clearly heading to church, watched the bus drive past, unable to stop for them. Their dismay and their attitude toward tourists was roundly evident in their facial expressions. The driver could only shake his head and shrug. The point is not that tourists should not visit Parc Güell, of course, but rather that the inability of Barcelona's physical infrastructure to support both permanent and temporary residents (as the city now terms its visitors) is increasingly clear. Tourism on a smaller scale is less damaging to local infrastructure, both built and natural, so while it is perhaps not exactly aiding its physical sustainability, it is at least less ruinous to it.

Preserving endogenous culture is also a sustainable development goal, and tourism has been affected by the desire to support and sustain local cultures. Large tourism practices encourage the "tourist gaze" described by John Urry in the 1990s and vividly expressed in popular culture by the American television show *Rick Steves' Europe*,¹ in which tourists are guided to basically consume—or gaze upon—a popular destination's tangible cultural assets. But small tourism, specifically creative tourism, not only reduces negative guest impact on local culture, but actually seeks to strengthen and revive cultural practices by weaving together the perspectives of guest and host. As the experience economy seeped into the tourism industry at the turn of this century,

visitors began to seek memorable and transformative experiences when travelling, experiences in which they did not merely gaze and graze the tangible, but actually engaged with the intangible cultural assets of place. Instead of purchasing a product, tourists started to purchase experiences. Relational or creative tourism pushed this idea further, such that residents and visitors were seen to co-create a sense of place, in terms of consciously engaging in local activities offered by locals, yes, but with visitors also contributing their own perspective and history to the moment, thus enriching the experience for both sides, and for the community more broadly. A great attraction of such an approach to tourism is that it is seen to contribute to cultural sustainability; as we learned in *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities*, and as we will see in this volume with regard to small tourism, successful creative tourism enterprises are largely community-based and collaboratively determined, with locals actively engaged in identifying and participating in their own endogenous cultural assets to share with visitors, thus creating cultural capital and establishing or supporting cultural networks. This participative approach to tourism by informed residents develops political agency, and also allows them to shield their cultural assets from the exploitation that mass tourism often inflicts.

Barcelona can provide another instructive example here. Las Ramblas, the central urban avenue in the Ciutat Vella (old town), stretching just over a kilometre from Port Vell to Plaça de Catalunya, used to be a local destination for Barcelonians to enjoy Sunday walks and leisure time with their families and friends. Since the city's rise as an international tourist destination with the 1992 Summer Olympics, Las Ramblas has been reduced to a street of cheap souvenir kiosks, fast food outlets, hordes of cruise passengers on their outings, and pickpockets—in short, a location avoided at all costs by permanent residents. Its decline, and that of the neighbourhood on its eastern side, El Gòtico, are vividly documented in Eduardo Chibàs Fernández's 2014 documentary *Bye Bye Barcelona*.² On the east side of Las Ramblas—so on the El Raval side of the Ciutat Vella—is the historic Mercado de la Boqueria, a large, covered food market that has been operating on the same site since the 1200s. Once the visitor penetrates through the vendors selling candy, Iberico ham, and fruit snacks situated just inside the Las Ramblas entrance (conveniently located, for tourists, across from the Erotic Museum of Barcelona), one finds that the stall keepers farther off the main thoroughfare are verbally adamant that visitors do not take photographs of their offerings, unlike those at the

front of the market, who encourage the snapping of pictures. I am well aware of that situation, because the first time I was there, in 2013, I was absolutely gobsmacked by the abundance and variety of fresh seafood so attractively displayed on beds of crushed ice. As I raised my phone to take a picture, the fishmonger put up her hand to block the photo, and sternly admonished me: “No tourist! No tourist! No picture!” I have been there many times since to purchase fresh fish for my dinners, and have seen that scenario play out time and again. Such is the stultifying effect of mass tourism on a local culture, as Fernández’s short film so poignantly demonstrates. But with small tourism, this does not have to happen. Consider another market in Barcelona, this time in a small neighbourhood in the Ciutat Vella, El Born, which lies just to the east of El Gòtico, a locally trendy but less-Disneyfied place where actual Barcelonians still live. In 2018, I was looking for some small tourism experiences, and as has been amply documented in the literature on creative tourism, local cooking classes fit the bill: small groups, offered by small enterprises, led by locals, and sharing both tangible and intangible endogenous cultural assets via foodways. I participated in the “Born to Cook”³ experience, in which our group of six participants purchased the produce and seafood required to make our paella during a tour of the Mercado de Santa Caterina, at which we were introduced to various vendors, before we gathered in a cozy basement kitchen to cook our food together. It was an informative market tour and a wonderful opportunity to see the chef’s local food cluster working together in this small tourism enterprise (we will see a similar enterprise in Bogotá, Colombia, in chapter 6, but in a more compromised neighbourhood). In this sustainable small tourism experience, we kept tourism dollars in the local economy, did not overly stress the physical environment or infrastructure, and respectfully shared the local culture in a way that supported, rather than hampered, its continued existence. Such are the possibilities of small tourism with regard to sustainable development.

In addition to its roles in supporting sustainable development as an alternative to mass tourism, the importance of small tourism has become heightened in the wake of COVID-19 and the havoc the pandemic has wreaked on the tourism industry. Lockdowns in various places have prevented any travel whatsoever, excluding perhaps to the grocery store or to the pharmacy. After those lockdowns, travel was for a year restricted to “local” movement, which of course has different meanings depending on where you live. In British Columbia, Canada, during the summer of 2021, people could

only travel within their region, but those are pretty big regions. The idea of the road trip as a form of tourism once again gained currency. Likewise, camping regained its former popularity. The pandemic encouraged travellers to discover, or perhaps rediscover, the delights of their own places. Writing for the *New York Times* in July 2021, Alexander Lobrano described the effect of COVID-19 on travel:

This kind of small-brush-stroke travel is intimately valuable, too, because it teaches us where we live and who we are. During the last few decades, the glamour of the exotic and far-flung has often prevailed as the grail of travel, when the truth is that it can be just as interesting to hop on a train to New Haven from New York City for a day trip as it is to go to Thailand. . . . What the Covid years have taught me again is that any journey, no matter how brief or local, is a success if it provokes and feeds my curiosity, and that yes, for me it will always be wonderful to just go, anywhere.

Ivan Baidin, writing for *Forbes* in 2021, noted the surge in attendance to state and national parks in the United States, and predicted that domestic tourism and the “staycation” would be the dominant trend in tourism for 2022. Sixty-four per cent of the experts interviewed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) believe that it will take until 2024 for international arrivals to regain 2019 levels. In January 2022, the UNWTO stated that

domestic tourism continues to drive recovery of the sector in an increasing number of destinations, particularly those with large domestic markets. According to experts, domestic tourism and travel close to home, as well as open-air activities, nature-based products and rural tourism, are among the major travel trends that will continue shaping tourism in 2022. (UNWTO 2022)

This context is a fertile ground for the kind of small tourism products we examine in this volume. For now, small tourism appears to be well positioned to challenge big tourism.

But small tourism providers and the tourists they serve are sadly no panacea for travel during COVID-19. Small tourism has also suffered, although it has perhaps, as a function of the characteristics of small tourism that we

will be exploring, had a less trying time. For example, McCormick and Qu (2021), in researching the impact of COVID-19 on creative tourism micro-enterprises in Japan's rural island of Naoshimo, found that the local cluster of providers, collaborating at the grassroots level, were able to leverage their networks in order to find innovative ways around the disarray and inaction with which the local government failed to support their small businesses during the worst of the pandemic in Japan. While we are still not fully out of the grip of COVID-19, the creative tourism micro-enterprises on Naoshimo are presently intact, bowed but not quite broken.

While it is highly unlikely that mass tourism will ever disappear, it does seem that, taken together, the pandemic, the consumer drift toward relational tourism, and the unsustainability of mass tourism have created a perfect storm in the face of which small tourism enterprises could advance. While small tourism experiences have of course been extant in various forms, we suggest that the profile of small has been heightened, and as such provides opportunities that are good for communities and visitors alike. That is really what this book is about.

How Small Is Small?

In this volume, we focus on the provision of small-scale creative tourism experiences that are thematically rooted in the specific location in which they are hosted. We understand these providers to be micro-enterprises that offer locally based experiences highlighting tangible and intangible cultural assets to either small groups of people or to individuals, in specific limited destinations, such as urban neighbourhoods, rural contexts, or peripheral locations. They concentrate on local cultural assets, both tangible and intangible. As defined by the European Commission (2015), a micro-enterprise is an independent business (to be clear, we also consider non-for-profit organizations) that employs fewer than ten people, and whose annual balance sheet does not exceed EUR 2 million, or somewhere around CAD\$2,800,000. Every tourism provider represented in this book can be defined as a micro-enterprise. Further, micro-tourism enterprises generally share a philosophy:

Tourism micro-firms typically design and deliver experiences that are based on local nature and culture and which involve other local actors (Komppula, 2014; Yachin & Ioannides, 2020). Through their operations, tourism micro-firms help to protect,

maintain and communicate the essence of the place (Middleton, 2001). Thus, tourism micro-firms have a meaningful contribution to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their localities (Hallak et al., 2013; Morrison, 2006). Their role is particularly significant in rural areas, where tourism is often seen as a development strategy, and micro-firms hold the potential to generate activity (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Cunha et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2010). (Yachin 2020)

Compared with our rather succinct understanding of small enterprises, our consideration of the *number* of tourists served is a little more difficult to categorize. In terms of numbers, the present volume examines cases that serve from one to about twenty-five participants. Two chapters discuss small arts festivals that nonetheless attract larger numbers, but these visitors are dispersed over several days across many events. COVID-19 has affected one of these festivals, which takes place in Hungary, and while continuing, the number of attendees has been reduced, and safety measures are in place. A couple of chapters do not actually discuss numbers of tourists, but rather address what we might term “niche” markets, groups that are sometimes difficult to identify, or that are not a marketing target, such as gay travellers in rural British Columbia. In this volume, we consider a niche group of the travelling public as “small.” Or at least smaller, especially with regard to destination marketing. Intentionally serving small numbers of visitors at one time is an important element of small tourism, as it allows for a deeper connection between the people thus engaged; small visitor groups is a stated feature of many of the creative tourism cases described in this volume.

Finally, we come to the most contested element of small tourism: the question of what counts as a small destination. The concept of a “micro-destination” is attractive, but Hernández-Martín et al. (2016) clearly define a micro-destination as a place that services tourists, quite apart from residents. The authors in this volume very much see small destinations as facilitating connections between resident, visitor, and place. They view small tourism as community-based, or as local tourism. In their book *Reinventing the Local in Tourism: Producing, Consuming and Negotiating Place*, Russo and Richards (2016) set out the characteristics of local tourism, which they correlate with the “creative turn”—as discussed in *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities*—in tourism. Local tourism can mean that any place in a given locality, and not

only its flagship cultural attractions, might be a destination. A community itself may determine what is noteworthy to share with visitors, based on its everyday culture and, most importantly, grounded in local points of connection between visitors and residents that occur in spaces, activities, and in social constructions. The local becomes more of an idea than a geographically bounded area. As Freya Higgins-Desbiolles and Bobbi Chew Bigby suggest (2022), a “local turn” in tourism studies allows us to “reconceptualize the local,” and to empower the community to define, express, and offer itself to guests. The local, after all, is more than a host community or a destination:

In our articulation of the local community as the linchpin of the local turn, we mean more than just a certain group of people associated with a place. Instead, we are more broadly inclusive of the local community, the local ecology (living air, land and waterscapes and more-than-human beings) and all generations pertaining to that place (including future ones). Using this broader articulation of the local opens up potential for enlivening forms of tourism. (2)

No longer are rural towns, urban neighbourhoods, and small cities the main points of connection in small tourism; these can now be found in much more unassuming sites, such as a certain corner, monument, cemetery, shop, or even the knowledge of how to create a traditional craft, prepare a dish, or carry out work that is endemic to the life of those who live locally. It can be a small arts festival, or a community centre. It can be a farmers’ market. It can be any small thing—and that is what we are focusing on in this book—that expresses the sense of place for locals and that, when that cultural asset intersects with the community’s desire to engage in tourism, results in creative tourism experiences that are sustainable, that are rooted in local nature and culture, and that strengthen, not deplete, the community’s sense of place and its local culture—very unlike the situation at Mercado de la Boqueria. I like the German concept of *der Ort*—the place, the point. In this case, a point of connection. So for us, a small tourism destination is a point at which locals, through micro-enterprises, have decided to share their place with a small number of visitors at one time. The following chapters share various perspectives on small creative tourism.

The Chapters

Small Tourism: Supporting Diversity Outside the Mainstream

Our first study, “The Development of Inclusive Small Rural Destinations for Gay Tourists in Canada,” authored by Spencer J. Toth, Josie V. Vayro, and Courtney W. Mason, is joined by its companion story, Katja Beck Kos, Mateja Meh, and Vid Kmetič’s, “Rajzefiber: A Community Hub for Small Tourism in the Small City of Maribor, Slovenia.” Toth, Vayro, and Mason explore perceptions of tourism in small rural communities in the interior of British Columbia, Canada, from the perspectives of both visitors and destination marketing organizations. More than eight thousand kilometres to the east, Kos, Meh, and Kmetič take readers through the concept, establishment, and activities of their micro-tourism enterprise in Slovenia. Both chapters are set in areas known for winter and summer outdoor tourism activities, as well as for adventure tourism. As both sets of authors point out, the tourism marketing agencies for both districts slant heavily toward such activities.

British Columbia is known to be culturally liberal, but Toth, Vayro, and Mason are examining small communities in the interior of the province, which are generally reliant on resource-extraction industries that are now in decline. Like many rural communities in that situation, tourism has provided another source of income. But the chapter’s research shows that the social conservatism that often exists in these cultures has raised concerns for gay travellers. While there certainly exist international small communities that purposefully cater to gay tourists—Sitges, Key West, Provincetown—interior BC communities are generally not considered in this light. Gay travellers to these rural BC communities comprise a niche market, a small and non-self-disclosing minority of visitors. Gay travellers, the authors show, want to travel to gay-friendly places where they can encounter familiar communities, feel safe, know they are accepted, and sense that the small community will welcome them for who they are and how they want to live. They feel somewhat apprehensive about engaging in tourism activities in rural British Columbia, often relying on gay-oriented social media like Grindr to find out about safe and welcoming places in the destination community. The authors suggest that small rural communities could see the interest of gay travellers, who want to expand their tourism world beyond “gay utopias,” as a potential growth market. However, marketing adjustments would be required in order

to better reach this small niche market. In their interviews with representatives of the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) responsible for these rural communities, Toth and his co-authors find that, although sympathetic, the DMOs suffer from a number of limitations. Marketing tools are based on analytics, and privacy legislation prevents questions about sexual orientation on consumer surveys. As well, gay tourists may well feel wary about self-disclosure. As such, this niche group is not only relatively small, but also quite hidden, so it does not turn up on surveys as an interest group, in contrast to, say, snowmobilers, skiers, fishers, or family groups. Funds follow numbers when determining destination marketing. Gay tourists in rural British Columbia are revealed in this chapter to be outside the mainstream of tourism, and as a small niche group are not marketed to, and thus often do not travel to where they might be interested in visiting, resulting in a loss for consumers, providers, and communities.

Readers may not think that, at 110,000 people, Maribor, a small city located in eastern Slovenia and the stepsister of the more popular Ljubljana, the country's cultural, political, economic, and administrative centre, would have much in common with rural BC communities in terms of tourism. But it does. The Slovenian Tourism Organization, the national DMO, offers an annual "Slovenian Incoming Workshop" for foreign tour operators, but it concentrates mostly on the western side of the country. The workshop focuses on known, tangible cultural assets, and the outdoor tourism assets abundant in Slovenia. The authors assert that as a result, "untypical, small-scale tourism places and enterprises must try to help themselves . . . with only scarce marketing funds, making it difficult to attract an international audience" (page 62). The concerns of the Rajzefiber authors in this chapter echo those enumerated by Toth, Vayro, and Mason; in order to expand markets and to meet the expectations of tourists who seek a safe and authentic local connection with a place, micro-tourism enterprises need the help of DMOs. DMOs, in turn, require funding to expand their campaigns and appropriately train staff. Both sets of authors, in these two widely distanced locations, offer the same suggestions to improve the problems they have identified. Toth and co-authors mention the use of Grindr by their survey respondents; the Rajzefiber crew also stress the need to use social media to connect with niche groups, but point out that as a micro-enterprise, they lack the funds, time, and expertise to leverage social media to their benefit. In both cases, there is a need for DMOs and other tourist promotion organizations to assist

with marketing and promotion to niche tourists outside the mainstream of what is generally promoted. For the DMOs, funding is the problem. Where tourism marketing dollars go is generally associated with the number of visits reported. So big tourism begets big tourism. Data that expresses the niche status of certain tourist groups is not available, and so they remain invisible. Small tourism requires the assistance that big tourism commands, both chapters affirm.

Both chapters also emphasize that social inclusion is a desirable effect of small tourism, the first chapter in terms of feeling at home in a destination community, and the second in terms of local authenticity of the tourism product. The need for the social inclusion of both residents and visitors is also highlighted. Including residents and visitors in shared enterprises is a challenge, although it always sounds very good in the scholarship of creative tourism in smaller places. In Maribor, Kos, Meh, and Kmetič share how much effort they put into encouraging community-led tourism planning, establishing credibility with residents, and forming partnerships with other community organizations. In rural British Columbia, Toth, Vayro, and Mason point out that while gay residents of small rural communities may feel uncomfortable publicly sharing their own clusters and networks with outside tourists, festivals are seen as a more general way to invite niche groups into the community and to engage visitors with it, all while establishing community partnerships. In Maribor, Razjefibre has developed the Festival of Walks to do exactly that. While micro-tourism enterprises and tourists who engage with them clearly make a choice alternative to mainstream tourism, in order to be sustainable and to contribute to their small communities, such enterprises need support to consistently attract the niche groups to which they cater. As Kos and co-others point out, it is hard to believe that the pandemic may have had any positive effects on the tourism industry, but perhaps the opportunity to reimagine strategies for more sustainable and inclusive tourism, including supporting small tourism, was one such benefit.

Small Tourism: Altruism, Education, and Restoring the Culture of Place

The broader understanding of “local” articulated by Higgins-Desbiolles and Bigby, discussed above, allows us to think of a place as including its history and its landscape. This definition of the local is particularly relevant to the two chapters that comprise our second study-story set. In their chapter “Sustaining

Castello Sonnino: Small Tourism in a Tuscan Village,” John S. Hull, Donna Senese, and Darcen Esau introduce us to Castello Sonnino, an ancient wine estate in a small Tuscan village, a place where the restoration of old traditions shared among the village, the land, and the residents is linked to educational tourism through the Sonnino family’s micro-tourism enterprise, the Sonnino International Education Centre (SIEC). The theme of expressing a local sense of place through cultural and ecological restoration and education reverberates in Moira A. L. Maley, Sylvia M. Leighton, Alison Lullfitz, Johannes E. Wajon, M. Jane Thompson, Carol Pettersen, Mohammadreza Gohari, and Keith Bradby’s “Revealing the Restorers: Small Tourism in Restored Lands of the Noongar Traditional Area of the Fitz-Stirling in Southwestern Australia,” a story about the people who have been restoring land and its relationship to Indigenous cultures disturbed over three decades of government-sponsored agricultural development. These restorers are also micro-enterprise providers of educational tourism. In maintaining and restoring both *mezzadria* (the linkage between land, resident, community—a living landscape) in Italy and the *Boodja* (the combined entity of land and Noongar culture) in Australia, both sets of providers, who have taken on their endeavours as family units, work on the local scale, integrating practices of sustainable economy, ecology, culture, and society. They bring in guests to educate them about the integration of the local landscape and culture, in hopes that highlighting their preservation efforts will benefit the local community and contribute to the sustainability of its traditional way of life, while at the same time providing a transformative travel experience. Small creative tourism optimizes experiential potential for tourists, so the size of visitor groups is kept small, and the pace slow, which in turn reduces the negative impacts often caused by larger tourism.

Hull, Senese, and Esau’s fulsome literature review on altruism and tourism identifies a reciprocal relationship between providers, guests, and communities, which can provide both direct (between two actors, including within community networks) and indirect (for the community as a whole) benefits. They point out that there is scant literature on intentional altruistic tourism—outside volunteer tourism—and they hope their chapter makes a contribution to this topic. Through their case study of a summer school at SIEC, the authors show how the Sonnino family is motivated to preserve their ancestors’ relationship with the land and the village of Montespertoli and

sustain the community's collaborative sharecropping system. As Hull and his co-authors write,

These participatory tourism experiences developed at Castello Sonnino have helped diversify small-scale tourism offerings in the region, and have transformed the estate into an economically viable and internationally recognized rural centre for sustainable development. Importantly, this case study has demonstrated that altruism—in this case, between hosts and students at the SEIC—plays an important motivating role in small tourism and shows how it can help preserve the environment and cultural heritage for future generations. (104)

The guests, in this case the participants and instructors at the 2018 SIEC summer school, fully participate in the operations of the estate and engage with the local community through experiential education. This three-way collaboration between provider, visitor, and community produces direct and indirect benefits for all, while at the same time co-creating what we can understand to be the “local,” a defining feature of creative tourism.

This altruistic intentional motivation to provide small tourism experiences is reflected in the personal stories of the land restorers recorded by Maley and her co-authors. The three families of restorers deliberately undertake the reparation of land and Noongar culture—together forming the *Boodja*—to its natural state. By hosting small visitor groups (typically ten to fifty visitors dispersed over a month) in the family-run restored areas, the authors report that,

in the context of small, relational tourism, we follow a journey of landscape and cultural reconnection that focuses on tourists' brief immersion with land restorers at the site of recreation. This creative approach is strategic, aligning with the principles of sustainable tourism (Bradby 2016, 316) and with those of altruistic tourism, yielding mutual benefits for the restorers and their visitors. (112)

Later in their chapter, they make a strong argument for indirect community benefit, another characteristic of altruistic tourism, as exposure to, experience

with, and reflection on local *Boodja* reparation creates a ripple effect encouraging strategies of sustainability in the wider Australian community.

In both the Italian and Australian cases, more than fifteen thousand kilometres apart, slow tourism allows time for the reflection and the relational aspects that small tourism engenders. There is no need to cover a lot of ground or to check items from a list. These small tourism adventures are more about feeling and experience, and quality above quantity. When altruistic providers offer slow tourism, they are more apt to master their art and provide quality—they think and feel deeply about the passion projects and lifestyles they are sharing. The authors in this set of chapters contend that the same is true for the consumers of these experiences. Guests have the feeling that they are making a genuine contribution within a continuum of sustainable development. Strong, long-lasting, and transformative change in these examples occurs both within and outside of the visitor, the resident, and the community. These chapters highlight the role of altruism in informing and supporting small-scale creative tourism, especially in rural areas. But small tourism also happens in cities.

Small Tourism: Sustaining Local Culture and Social Inclusion in Urban Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods in cities are often understood to be destinations for tourists: the red-light district in Amsterdam, Gastown in Vancouver, or El Gótico in Barcelona. However, the neighbourhoods in which residents actually live not only comprise geographical units of cities, they also contain elements of the local as described by Higgins-Desbiolles and Bigby. Indeed, tourists seeking immersion in local culture will look for the smaller nooks and crannies of cities, in hopes of engaging in authentic experiences on a human—or small—scale. The DMO for Copenhagen, in fact, bases its entire campaign on this idea through the concept of “localhood.”²⁴ Both chapters in this study-set explore small tourism in neighbourhoods of larger urban centres. Andre Principe examines how a neighbourhood cultural association is actually an actor in local tourism in “The Role of Cultural Associations in the Promotion of Small Tourism and Social Inclusion in the Neighbourhood of Bonfim, Oporto: the Case of Casa Bô.” In their story of creating local tourism experiences in “Small Tourism in a Big City: The Story of 5Bogota,” Diana Guerra Amaya and Diana Marcela Zuluaga Guerra show how their experience operating a tourism micro-enterprise reflects many of the themes

Principe identifies in his chapter, most notably how locals have taken control of the tourism experiences offered by their own neighbourhood. In exploring the creation of tourism in these small locales in Oporto and Bogotá, we see strands of the neolocalism investigated by Linda Ingram, Susan L. Slocum, and Christina Cavaliere in 2020. Susan L. Slocum explains:

Neolocalism involves the crafting of the tourism product that reflects the culture, history, and value system inherent in a destination. Neolocalism is defined as “the reaction of individuals and groups to consciously establish, rebuild, and cultivate local ties, local identities, and local economies.” (2020, 208)

In this deliberate decision to circumvent the traditional tropes of tourism, and in the political decision to take the sharing and consumption of their own locale into their own hands, residents of neighbourhoods create authenticity by offering their own experiences of their localhoods, their ways of life, as a tourism product. The local is the most authentic offering tourists can encounter—a cultural association in a parish of Oporto, or a farmers’ market in a compromised neighbourhood of Bogotá, provide glimpses into a genuine way of life, as does a relationship between visitors and residents that benefits both, as well as the community. Such subtle expressions of a particular place are not available through larger tourism experiences, nor can they be furnished by traditional tourism providers. Small creative tourism knits a shared community experience.

Principe presents the parish of Bonfim, challenged by COVID-19, an aging population, and swaths of deserted buildings. Guerra and Zuluaga describe how Bogotá has suffered not only from COVID-19, but also, famously, from the insecurity and danger caused by drug trafficking and guerilla activity, as well as decades of international isolation as a result. As they explain, “Most of its population lives in financially vulnerable conditions, where they are viewed as a mass, closer to being numbers than persons” (page 156). Though separated by seventy-five hundred kilometres, both locations host communities whose members endure social exclusion and economic insecurity. The authors of both chapters are of the opinion that tourism micro-enterprises developed via community-led planning contribute to social inclusion and sustainability in urban neighbourhoods, and that such enterprises provide

at least one strategy to reclaim the social agency that is often muted, if not buried, by the homogeneity of big tourism.

Principe's study describes the Casa Bô cultural association, a non-profit or third-sector organization responsible for providing Bonfim with programs that support culture, environmental sustainability, and social solidarity. Run by volunteers and locally led, it offers what for-profit or municipal bodies do not. Principe's research reveals that its activities also serve small numbers of tourists, as Oporto's burgeoning tourism industry expands outside its extant infrastructure, in the city's centre, and as tourism consumer trends embrace local authenticity. While challenging traditional tourism patterns and offering new touristic options, the activities in which visitors engage at Casa Bô also support neighbourhood residents through community engagement to create social inclusion and connect locals and residents for a more sustainable tourism that brings some tourism wealth into the community. Visitors tread the paths of the everyday life of the place and experience events as local residents do. With economic profit not being the main motivator at Casa Bô, it is free to create social capital by engaging residents in its activities, which serve the interest of the residents, the visitors, and the community.

Guerra and Zuluaga's story provides a how-to guide that mirrors Principe's findings, and it is firmly grounded in neolocalism in both content and intent. After detailing the challenges of under-served populations in Bogotá, and asserting that the big tourism offerings of beaches and nightlife do not serve these residents, the authors explain

That is why we at 5Bogota decided to create a project that opens the possibility for real and everyday people to break into the tourism industry through the concept of small, creative tourism.

...

5Bogota is a small tourism start-up that connects travelers with local hosts who showcase the country realistically and uniquely. At 5Bogota, we design tours and experiences that are completely authentic, through which travellers learn about our culture and our people while supporting local development. This has the potential to transform the Colombian travel industry, making it more inclusive and participative. (157)

Guerra and Zuluaga proceed to provide a step-by-step guide for practitioners interested in developing a tourism micro-enterprise that furnishes small-scale experiences based on local tangible and intangible cultural assets to modest numbers in local neighbourhoods. Their methodology is based on utilizing or creating clusters of partners who wish to share their everyday experience with visitors, and who engage in a collaborative cultural mapping process to determine the final shape of the tourism products. This strategy not only results in authentic local experiences, but more importantly, it also creates agency, social inclusion, and cultural capital. The authors then provide three examples of their products. Like the Razjefibre tours in Maribor, one of the goals of 5Bogota is to bring and keep tourism dollars in the neighbourhood.

5Bogota and Casa Bô rely on collaborative, community-led planning to present their micro-tourism products; both cite workshops⁵ and gastro-nomic experiences as ways to engage small groups of visitors and residents at the same point in space and time, sharing local endogenous knowledge. As Principe explains about the social dinners hosted at Casa Bô:

Greater social interaction takes place most prominently at the vegetarian dinners that occur before evening cultural events. Event artists, members of Casa Bô, and the audience share a long table with seating for about sixteen people, or other tables around the kitchen and library room. During dinner, everyone sits at a table with no marked places, and usually the members of Casa Bô sit and interact with visitors so that there is more interaction and contact between all. This initiative allows for the beginning of new friendships between residents, tourists, artists, and volunteers of the cultural association. (138)

Guerra and Zuluaga on the same topic:

Gastronomy is one of the crucial elements to research if you want to share with your visitors the customs of local culture; meals can foster moments of profound connection with locals and their customs. These moments happen organically as visitors and residents enjoy the flavours and scents of a meal, snack, or beverage. During these activities, language barriers are also reduced for both foreigners and locals, increasing social inclusion for all. (163)

Small tourism in these examples not only offers visitors an authentic local experience, but also provides one strategy for creating a more informed, active, and socially inclusive community. In urban centres, such neighbourhood engagement can also help disperse tourists from over-touristed central areas, as these two chapters demonstrate.

Small Tourism: Networking and Arts Festivals in the Periphery

Our next set of chapters takes us out of urban neighbourhoods and into peripheral areas. Large and well-known arts festivals create their own cultures, to which participants flock annually, such as the Burning Man music festival in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. The cultures of such huge festivals are formed from self-generated practices, guided by the philosophies of their leaders, and can be mobile. So the cultural assets they produce and reproduce are not endogenous; they may be “local” to the festival, but they are not particularly tied to place. Burning Man’s “10 Principles,” on which its activities are based, does not mention any real geographical location; instead, they construct “Black Rock City” every August.⁶ But when they are tied to location, especially to geographically peripheral ones, are intentionally connected to community cultural assets, and are developed as a result of community-led planning, small arts festivals in small places can be powerful engines to express a sense of place, to create cultural capacity, to facilitate social inclusion, and to encourage visitor-resident co-creation.

In their contributions to the book *Neolocalism and Tourism: Understanding a Global Movement* (2020), both Ros Derrett’s and Guanhua Peng, Solène Prince, and Marianna Strzelecka’s chapters explore this theme in New South Wales, Australia, and Öland, Sweden, respectively. Their work contributes to the literature on arts festivals in the periphery, which is also the topic of the first study in our fourth set of chapters, Emese Panyik and Attila Komlós’s “Cultural Festivals in Small Villages: Creativity and the Case of the Devil’s Nest Festival in Hungary.” Panyik and Komlós point out that “little is known about the potential of festivals to draw attention to underdeveloped, small, and isolated regions,” and that, like the authors in *Neolocalism and Tourism*, they “aim to address that research gap” in their chapter. They believe, like most authors in the present volume, that “authentic experiences are often segregated, hidden in isolated places far from urban areas or popular tourist attractions or destinations. Larger tourism enterprises are typically ill-suited for small, creative tourism experiences” (pages 173–74).

Panyik and Komlós's chapter details the importance of creative clusters and community networking in producing this annual festival. Networking in small communities is a feature of small creative tourism experiences, and it is that networking that binds not only residents to visitors, but, arguably more importantly, residents to each other and to their place. Peng, Prince, and Strzelecka's case study of the Skördefest harvest festival, which celebrates local foodways, mirrors Panyik and Komlós' work on the Devil's Nest Festival, which "was born in a remote limestone quarry located about twenty kilometres from the closest city, Pécs, as a small-scale arts festival, through the collaboration of four neighbouring villages and two wineries" (page 174). Even though Pécs is two thousand kilometres southeast of Öland, our study echoes Peng, Prince, and Strzelecka's, showing, as Panyik and Komlós assert, that

in order to create an authentic experience, tourist events should reflect the origins of the place. As interactivity and community-led planning and participation are among the chief festival objectives, various new creative forms of artistic expression have been developed in which local entrepreneurs, visitors, and residents actively co-create, mostly by means of open-air performances, with minimal design and accessories, drawing on local resources. (185)

Both of these studies in two different books offer calls to action for small festivals in small places, which these authors argue support local creative clusters through visitor-resident engagement, resulting not only in financial benefits to the community but also in cultural sustainability.

These ideas reverberate in the story that accompanies Panyik and Komlós's chapter, Donald Lawrence's "Artistic Micro-Adventures in Small Places," a memoir about his experiences as a visual artist participating in three Canadian small arts festivals in the relatively remote communities of North Bay, Ontario, St. John's, Newfoundland, and Dawson City, Yukon. Lawrence has three objectives in sharing his story, and they pair resoundingly with the accompanying study by Panyik and Komlós:

First, the context of this volume may simply be a good opportunity to call attention to such arts events as these for practitioners and scholars of tourism, in the hopes of interesting tourism

promoters in small arts festivals. Second, in some respects, these sorts of events work best because they are organized by a small collaborative network in a local community, including artists, and perhaps some artists from other places. The tourists, maybe small in number, who purposefully or otherwise find themselves in the middle of such events, will experience something special, something genuinely experimental and/or local in conception—often a one-time-only experience. Third, though the artists and curators who come from away to participate in such events may not be tourists in the typical sense, they are often highly engaged visitors to such communities, contributing to local economies and intent on building important linkages between small places, networks comprising members of an extended cultural community, which may be an important ingredient for the sustainability of small tourism in small places. (192)

Lawrence's "micro-adventures," placed in the context described by Panyik and Komlós, and considered in relation to studies such as those by Ros Derrett, which demonstrates that "community-led festivals celebrate the community's social identity, its historical continuity, and its cultural resilience" (2020, 103), make real and give experiential substance to the concept that small arts festivals in small places "are socially constructed and negotiated phenomena that can be staged in everyday places that also become tourist places" (103). Lawrence's piece "One Eye Folly," located a half-mile offshore from North Bay on the ice of frozen Lake Nipissing, demonstrates the potential of community-based small tourism in the close-knit places that not only celebrate but also rely on their local traditions, such as life on the ice in the frozen North. Canada is a long way from Hungary, but Lawrence's story corroborates and amplifies the results of Panyik and Komlós' research. Small arts festivals, conceived and organized by locals, and the involvement of networked community volunteers, can be a deliberate strategy in which small tourism is deployed to promote cultural sustainability. This idea was also voiced in our first set of chapters set in rural British Columbia and Maribor, Slovenia. And cultural sustainability is a way forward to a resilient future not only for local communities, but also, as we will see in the final study-story set, for tourism as a sustainable industry.

Small Tourism: Community Resilience and Agency

COVID-19 has highlighted the need for resilience in the tourism industry. In this section's study, Meng Qu and Simona Zollet argue that community-based tourism activities in small places have a huge impact on the quality of life, revitalization and resilience, and sustainability of local populations. Tourism is often seen as the last chance for challenged places. The power of small is that it is flexible and can generate great impacts. It can also offer unique, one-of-a-kind experiences based on place. Developing micro-tourism enterprises can be attractive for entrepreneurs who are not motivated purely by profit and who wish to contribute to their communities as well. These are lifestyle entrepreneurs, similar to those in our section on altruism and small tourism. Creative tourism in particular, which relies on meaningful participation in local intangible cultural knowledge, is often best offered in small places to small groups. In their chapter "The Power of Small: Creative In-Migrant Micro-Entrepreneurs in Peripheral Japanese Islands during COVID-19," Qu and Zollet's research on the island of Mitarai shows how the integration of various local and external networks developed in tourism micro-enterprises contributes to "individual and community-level resilience" on this island, on which two-thirds of the residents are over sixty-five, with half of those over eighty. The tourism enterprises in this already fragile peripheral community that depends on tourism for economic sustainability was especially challenged to help ensure the safety of this vulnerable local population during the pandemic. Qu and Zollet's work shows "how COVID-19, despite its initial negative impact on tourism, also served as the catalyst for creative adaptation and innovation processes both at the individual and network levels" (page 236). The authors further argue that their

findings add to the literature on the role of creative micro-businesses in small declining communities as a major driving force in supporting tourism development in ways that are respectful of the local community, enhance its social resilience, and promote sustainable tourism development and regional revitalization (Fleming 2010; Jóhannesson and Lund 2018; Qu and McCormick, and Funck 2020; Yachin and Ioannides 2020). The examples presented in the chapter show the social innovation aspects of diversified micro-entrepreneurs and their networks and their involvement in community-engaged initiatives. Small-scale

businesses in small-scale destinations are more likely to develop their businesses through a creative enhancement approach (Mitchell 2013); in our examples, the crucial role played by their creative and relational attributes was demonstrated during the pandemic. The social role of micro-businesses can be described as the capacity to use innovative ideas to enhance community resilience. (237)

This case study took place from 2017 to 2021, so both before and during the pandemic. The author's findings echo a case study carried out from 2017 to 2019 in the small Central Appalachian community with the pseudonym Nolan, whose population of approximately two thousand has been decimated by the decline of the coal industry, authored by Neda Moayerian, Nancy G. McGehee, and Max O. Stephenson (2022). Although they do not broach COVID-19, Moayerian and her co-authors examine a community arts collective's work in small tourism, and ask

whether and how the interaction of community cultural development and community capacity were influencing the sustainability of tourism in the small community we studied. Those interviewed for this study contended that the Collective's work has contributed to more sustainable tourism in Nolan by increasing residents' participation in tourism decision-making processes, encouraging locals' partnership and ownership of tourism development projects, and providing space for more genuine guest-host relationships. Effective engagement manifested as more informed and inclusive decision-making processes. Those, along with engaged residents' capacity to collaborate and own tourism projects appeared to be leading to increased "fairness and equity in the distribution and use of tourism-related resources" (Dangi & Jamal, 2016, p. 457). Additionally, community cultural development's contributions to residents' balanced awareness of tourism development, along with their capacity to engage in authentic dialogue with tourists (i.e., the hospitality and stewardship of local culture) look set to support ongoing efforts to develop a more sustainable form of tourism in Nolan. (11–12)

These findings support those of Qu and Zollet. Both studies, carried out around the same time approximately sixty-seven hundred kilometres apart, show that integrated clusters of creative actors offering small tourism experiences contribute to the development, resilience, agency, cultural and social capacity, and sustainability of small places.

The emphasis on sustainable local development through community-based tourism is a trend identified by Ian Yeoman and Una McMahon-Beattie as one of their ten predictions offered in “Small Tourism and Ecotourism: Emerging Micro-Trends,” our volume’s final chapter. They contend that

COVID-19 has changed the world, and from a tourism perspective, destinations have started to think about the values that are important to them. Therefore, tourists in general are thinking “local,” “visiting friends and relatives,” and “doing the right thing” (Carr 2020; Sharfuddin 2020; Sheldon 2021). Often, this means small trips to visit small groups. (243)

Two of the trends the authors point out, supporting local and an increased sense of community, mirror the findings of Qu and Zollet’s case study. Yeoman and Mahon-Beattie, like Qu and Zollet, argue that the “ability of small tourism destinations to deliver rare, bespoke, local experiences provides the tourist with opportunities to acquire . . . the ultimate souvenir” (page 249). These visitors to small communities constitute another trend, the authentic-seeker: “small destinations with a clear sense of place, heritage, and culture are well positioned to deliver the unique experiences so keenly sought after by authentic-seekers” (page 246). Both chapters in this set also conclude that the impact of COVID-19 provides an opportunity for tourism to reimagine the future. Both sets of authors surmise, in the words of Yeoman and Mahon-Beattie, that

small tourism allows communities to address issues of social inequality, to create a sense of place, to gain ownership of the tourism-development process, and, most importantly of all, to allow the development of entrepreneurship and innovation. (258)

Like all chapters in this book, this set points to the burgeoning interest in and implementation of community-based micro-enterprises in tourism futures.

Small communities with informed residents can be innovative when it comes to developing small tourism enterprises that reap all the benefits of creative tourism, including cultural resilience and participant agency.

Can Small Tourism Help Define the Path to Regenerative Tourism?

Throughout this introduction, I have sought to orient readers of this volume within the context of my earlier edited volume, *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities*, as I conceive these two books very much as a complementary pair. Because I wanted in this book to provide as much content for students as for practitioners curious about case studies of small tourism in small places, I alerted the reader to the study-story structure as a device to express the common themes demonstrated in each set of chapters, emphasizing that the issues raised in tourism scholarship also exist for—in this case—small tourism entrepreneurs, consumers, and locations. None of the authors gathered here knew who the other authors would be, so I did not construct these mirroring concepts—they bubbled up in the work, and I merely noticed and arranged the sets to highlight these connections. By way of acquainting the reader with our authors and their chapters, I identified the conceptual constituents that led me to arrange the work into these particular sets, and further contextualized the sets with recent scholarship and pieces from the popular press that reflect similar ideas or findings. Finally, I endeavoured to connect each set of chapters to the definition of and conditions for creative tourism established in 2021's *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities*.

Small tourism in small places with small numbers of visitors is not the catholicon for the problems generated by mass tourism or the obliteration caused by the pandemic. Nor will mass tourism likely disappear. But as a number of our authors—and others—have pointed out, this crisis provides a useful opportunity to rethink tourism, and perhaps a great chance for community-led and community-based micro-tourism to establish a foothold as waves of tourists begin to crest again. This rethinking includes a call for a more informed local community that engages actively and intelligently in the creation of tourism experiences. Local, community-led tourism practice is thus a topic of great interest. Books such as Nancy Duxbury, Sara Albino, and Cláudia Carvalho's *Creative Tourism: Activating Cultural Resources and Engaging Creative Travellers* (2021) offers perspectives for tourism providers.

Similarly, tourism journals are publishing articles about the rise in local community participation that create resident agency, taking a hand in their place's tourism. Quite recently, Dimitrios Styliadis and Ana Maria Dominguez Quintero (2022), in their study on resident knowledge of tourism and positive word-of-mouth endorsements in Seville, Spain, wrote,

A tenable explanation offered by . . . researchers is that knowledge reinforces “critical citizens” who hold more critical attitudes towards further tourism development (Christensen & Laegreid, 2005). For Rua (2020) . . . these more knowledgeable residents can act as gatekeepers of sustainable tourism development in the area, with such knowledge elevating their notion of empowerment (Joo et al., 2020). For example, Joo et al. (2020) reported that the more knowledgeable about tourism local residents were, the more psychologically, socially, and politically empowered they felt. In contrast, lack of knowledge is reported as a main obstacle in residents' participation in decision making related to tourism (Weng & Peng, 2014).

But recent scholarship calls not only for informed residents, but also informed visitors who make tourism choices that benefit the destination community. Dianne Dredge has recently written that acting on this call requires a complete change of mindset, a paradigm shift she believes is currently underway in many fields. In her 2022 article “Regenerative Tourism: Transforming Mindsets, Systems and Practices,” she establishes a case for regenerative tourism, which she says “seeks to ensure travel and tourism reinvest in people, places and nature and that it supports the long-term renewal and flourishing of our social-ecological systems.” She further argues that “regenerative tourism requires a deeply engaged bottom-up approach that is place-based, community-centred and environment-focused.”

These are also characteristic elements of small creative tourism experiences. Also writing in 2022, and in the context of the war in Ukraine, Sara Dolnicar and Scott McCabe published a piece in *Annals of Tourism Research* introducing the concept of “solidarity tourism,” which they define as

tourism-related action taken by governments, tourism businesses and tourists to help people suffering during and after crises,

driven by empathy towards people, a sense of unity, and a shared understanding of societal standards and responsibilities.

The tourism industry in Ukraine, they suggest, could rebuild its offerings with an emphasis on helping locals. This, too, sounds like one of the desirable tenets of small creative tourism enterprises. Perhaps small tourism has the ability to contribute to regenerative tourism.

In this introduction's survey of the chapters you are about to read, we see this theme of local empowerment through resident involvement in community-based tourism, and we recognize the benefits of an informed resident participation. We see elements of neolocalism, altruism, diversity, and ecology. We see the need to support and market tourism micro-enterprises. We see trends pulling tourists to smaller places. We see visitors and residents coming together to co-create place. We see walks and workshops. We see gastronomy and art. We see festivals. We see niche markets and niche experiences. We see authenticity. We see economic, ecological, social, and cultural sustainability. We observe the marked emphasis on local. But above all, we see small. And in my view, we see that small creative tourism initiatives can be part of the movement toward regenerative tourism.

Big tourism is not only unsustainable; it also does not address tourism trends such as those enumerated in Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie's chapter in this volume. Neither does it account for local tourism. I live part of the year in Mainz, an ancient city on the Rhine that has been my family's home for generations. There is plenty of traditional tourism available here, what with *die Altstadt*, the Romans, Gutenberg, the world wars, the museums, the Mainz Citadel, the river, cathedrals, old churches, the city's thrice-weekly open farmers market, and, of course, the wine. There is no end of city tours complete with guides holding colour-coded flags and tourists with headsets coming off the river cruises. I wanted to seek out some small tourism activities in the months I've been here working on this book, so that I could learn a bit more about my city's *Orte*—those points at which residents, visitors, and sense of place come together. I wondered if my hypotheses about small tourism and community are actually reflected in the place where I live. It took a while, but I eventually found a tourism micro-enterprise called Best of Mainz (founded by Stephanie Jung in 2016, with five employees).⁷ I was able to tour and learn fascinating stories about neighbourhoods that are not of particular interest to typical tourists. I took two of the walks, and was interested to find

not a single tourist among the ten guests that made up the tour of *die Neustadt*, nor in the sixteen that made up that of the Hauptfriedhof—the main cemetery. All were Mainz residents. I asked them why they were there, and they all thought they would like to know more about their town. One couple said they often walk by the main cemetery, but they did not know much about its history, and nothing about its cultural significance. As we stopped at places where our guides provided explanations, the Mainzers would often chime in with their own stories about that particular *Ort*, or would chat about the *Ort* and their experiences with it among themselves. Here, I saw real community development, real resident engagement with place, real social capital being built. The shared stories wove a tapestry of community perspectives. Small places, small groups, small provider. Frau Jung, when I interviewed her on 17 March 2022, said she did not have tourists in mind when she started her walking tours—they were at first a way to market her books on Mainz, also her family’s hometown for generations. The walks proved very successful, even with tourists, but on the majority of her tours, which tend to attract people who are interested in the lived culture of Mainz, as opposed to those who merely want to check off items from a list, Frau Jung says she wants to provide an alternative perspective of Mainz: Mainz the way a local knows it. I share this story—and believe me, it is much abridged, and would be better discussed over a glass (or two) of nice crisp local Riesling—because isn’t that just what we have been talking about in this introduction to small tourism? Someone exploring localhood as curated by its residents, with the ripples from these interactions nourishing the community’s well-being. Such can be the effect of small.

NOTES

- 1 <https://www.ricksteves.com>.
- 2 The film is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdXcFChRpmI>.
- 3 <https://borntocookbarcelona.com>.
- 4 <https://localhood.wonderfulcopenhagen.dk>.
- 5 Readers interested in pursuing other examples of micro-enterprises offering local, endogenous-knowledge workshops are well-advised to watch the fabulous documentary *CREATOUR—Creative Tourism in Portugal* directed by Nuno Barbosa, which showcases the creative tourism projects initiated by this groundbreaking creative tourism institution founded in Portugal by Nancy Duxbury at the Centre for Social

- Studies at the University of Coimbra. The film is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXVsGLGUaUs&ab_channel=NunoBarbosa.
- 6 <https://burningman.org/about/10-principles/>.
- 7 <https://best-of-mainz.com/#!/cal-d/2021-08-28/cw/5f1986b5310e789b0678c29f2614d5af>.

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