**‘Hospitality in a Changing World’**

**Nikolaos Pappas**, University of Sunderland

**Eleni Michopoulou**, University of Derby

This special issue of *Hospitality & Society* Journal titled ‘Hospitality in a Changing World’ was born out of *Tourism, Hospitality, and Events International Conference* (*THE INC*) hosted by the University of Derby in conjunction with Sunderland University and the Centre in Research for Tourism Excellence (CERTE) on 26–28 June 2018 in Buxton, UK. The conference aimed to bring together international scholars to discuss how to effectively respond to important micro and macro changes affecting the Tourism, Hospitality and Events industries, and the rituals of hospitality. The uncertainty created by a multitude of current factors (e.g. globalization, economic unpredictability, terrorism and the rapid development of Information Technology (IT) and Information Communication Technology (ICTs) combined with important societal consumer changes) has created a multiplicity of sophisticated challenges to industry operators worldwide that, today more than ever, need to be explored and addressed (Pappas and Bregoli 2016). This special issue includes contributions from a variety of countries including Albania, Brazil, Greece, Spain and United Kingdom. The viewpoints from different geographical regions contribute towards our better understanding of how these challenges affect hospitality in different parts of the globe. A total of eight papers are included in this special issue, all addressing the theoretical and practical implications of the status of hospitality in a changing world. Significantly, they make an important contribution towards the advancement of knowledge within hospitality studies as they are concerned with key issues pertaining to our online world and the physical world, the nature of hospitableness, and experience design and consumption.

For instance, the papers by Mellinas and Reino and Gavioli and Bastos look into the implications of business practises online. In particular, Mellinas and Reino’s work on ‘fake advertising’ is timely and critical, considering the proliferation of the Internet as a key instrument for holiday decision-making (Schuckert et al. 2015) and the fact that consumers are inclined to trust online reviews more than marketing messages (Browning et al. 2013). As the role of social media and the Internet is increasingly important to hospitality businesses (Michopoulou and Moisa 2018), increasingly more consumers tend to use them for the evaluation of their selections, as a decision-making barometer, and for booking purposes (Viglia et al. 2016). Considering that consumers today are overloaded with information (much of which is #fakenews) it becomes more pertinent today to strengthen our knowledge of deceptive advertising, i.e. the use of inaccurate claims leading consumers to make wrong judgements (Burke et al. 1997).

Gavioli and Bastos on the other hand offer a brighter perspective on the opportunities offered by the use of the Internet for hospitality. It is only through innovation and new ways of thinking that businesses can finally survive and develop (Sok and O’Cass 2011). In particular, Gavioli and Bastos are looking into how meal-sharing websites foster commensality in domestic environments as part of the sharing economy. Whilst their findings suggest that the narratives employed by meal-sharing sites are not perfectly aligned with the reality of the business, they find that our online world offers a constant opportunity for innovation and entrepreneurship, and allows hospitality to grow both as a form of business and as a sentiment grounded in hospitableness (Telfer 2017).

The idea of hospitableness is further explored by Tomasella and Ali within the context of SMEs. Despite the fact that small- and medium-sized businesses such as hospitality firms are the backbone of the local economy ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation, environmental protection and social integration (Midttun et al. 2006), the literature is predominantly silent in terms of studies dealing with their social responsibility (Pietro 2017; Farrington et al. 2017). Tomasella and Alis’ work indicates that in lifestyle and family businesses, personal values, such as altruism, friendliness and a passion for food, influence the hospitableness and social responsibility of the small foodservice business. Their research contributes to the hospitality literature by empirically demonstrating how hospitableness can be expressed through small business social responsibility, which can provide, in the long term, a competitive advantage for small, independent foodservice businesses (Jones et al. 2016; Farrington et al. 2017; Higgins-Desbiolles et al. 2019; Pietro 2017).

However, hospitableness is often expressed and conveyed through the interaction between hosts and guests (Bialski 2012; Cavagnaro et al. 2018). Within SMEs this responsibility lies within a more contained number of staff who often assume multiple roles within the organization. Giousmpasoglou sheds light on the factors affecting and shaping the GM’s work in small- and medium-sized luxury hotels. Findings suggest that there are five key factors affecting GMs’ work: career development and mobility; contact intensity; owner-GM relations; dealing with corruption; and networking and reputation. This study is important as it provides a better understanding of managerial work outside the corporate and multinational hotel chain environment context. It further contributes towards our understanding of HR issues within hospitality as it highlights that, although hotel managers are expected to behave and work in a standardized ‘universal’ manner (Gannon et al. 2015), GMs adopt an ‘individualized’ manner as a response to internal and external context conditions. Researching and understanding these individualized responses is critical as they are integral to guest-host interaction and a central notion to the service experience concept.

Service experience attributes in hospitality firms do not just derive from accommodation, but also from diverse supporting attributes and interactions (UNTWO 2015; Kandampully et al. 2018). The paper by Torres et al. in this issue considers the role of the network in service experience. The authors expand the traditional marketing approach to study the service experience – based on the customer´s subjective perceptions – towards a strategic and managerial perspective by incorporating the necessity to collaborate with multiple partners – providers, suppliers, competitors. Their work highlights the importance of obtaining knowledge from different agents, leading firms to establish strategic networks enabling the offering of high value-added products and at the same time, remain competitive.

This network approach may in turn have an impact on the willingness to pay premium prices in accommodation establishments, a topic discussed in this issue by Fragogianni. In an era of constant change and exponential increase in the importance of value-for-money, hotels need to appropriately reorient their pricing strategies. Thus, premium pricing policies are perceived as a sensitive issue, considering their propensity to boost loyalty, brand equity and preference. However, if combined with appropriate image and aesthetics and place-making practices, they can reinforce the tendency to pay premiums (Godey et al. 2016). However, it is important to examine the customer value beyond functional attributes, providing a special reference on the brand and consumer experience (Schmitt and Rogers 2008).

Remaining within the theme of service and brand experiences, the paper by Beka and Cenko looks into how hotel design influences consumer brand experiences. This work is important because of the multidisciplinary nature of the design discipline, particularly integrating design research within the field of experiential branding. It incorporates psychology, art, engineering and marketing, putting together the common ground for further studying the ‘design for experiences’ concept. The provision of memorable experiences is of exceptional importance as a key source of long-term competitive advantage (Chang 2018; Eide et al. 2017). The authors also claim that beautifying hotel spaces and cultivating unique and sensory customer experiences will become the key challenge for most marketers. This contributes to the existing discourses about the significance of space and place within hospitality (Suvantola 2018; Sandiford and Divers 2018; Govers and Go 2009).

Another contribution to these discourses is the paper by Morton and Johnson, which looks into planning for hospitable public spaces in the changing city. Whilst the public-private continuum is a recognized feature of the domains of hospitality, the spaces that constitute the public domain, which cross commercial and civic interests, remain under-researched (Bell 2007; McNeil 2008). Morton and Johnsons’ work provides a useful lens through which to view the travails of the contemporary western city, trying hard to position itself to prosper in a globalized world in which extremely mobile capital and a professional workforce seek high-quality destinations. This work is important because issues associated with the use of public space (despite being a key debate in urban studies) are rarely discussed in the tourism and leisure literature (Ashworth and Page 2011). The ever-changing role of tourism and hospitality includes the future of urban regeneration in post-industrial cities; since hotels are perceived as key components in welcoming visitors, they form a symbol of the hospitable city (Craggs 2012).

Overall, this issue brings together a collection of scholars who investigate the changing patterns of hospitality consumption and production practices and the lessons that industry and academia can draw from them. In recent years, the growth of tourism and hospitality has been faster than the growth of the wider economy and other significant sectors such as financial services, health care and automotive (WTTC 2015). In fact, the exponential growth of global tourism and hospitality sectors over the last few decades has led to them currently constituting the world’s largest service industry (Duncan et al. 2013). This rapid growth creates the need for the hospitality industry to be ready to adapt to the ever-changing environment. The exponential internationalization of the industry has brought increasingly more international customers from distinctively different cultural backgrounds (Wang et al. 2015), whilst hospitality companies are increasingly challenged by the rapid growth of the sharing economy (Pappas 2017). In addition, the rapid development within hospitality and its related research is not only linked to macro- and micro-environmental factors, but also influenced by the multidisciplinary nature of the industry. This issue brings forth key issues within the wider hospitality field and highlights the crossovers with other disciplines and fields (i.e as online marketing, human resources, CSR, place and space design, urban development, network theory). Incorporating perspectives and research from different scientific fields and disciplines is highly important for the understanding of the evolutionary process and the changing dynamics within hospitality (Lynch et al. 2011). Whilst this issue sheds some light on key challenges faced by hospitality today, it is by no means a comprehensive overview of the plethora of issues that currently exist and constantly evolve. Hospitality researchers need to remain vigilant and continue their relentless and constant efforts to investigate and make sense of operations and rituals of hospitality in an ever-changing world.

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**Contributor details**

Dr Nikolaos Pappas is a reader in tourism, hospitality and events and the Director of Centre for Research in Tourism Excellence (CERTE) at the University of Sunderland. He holds a doctorate (Ph.D.) in tourism development and planning, and a post-doctorate (PDoc) in risk and crisis management. He started working in tourism in 1990, and he has participated in nationally and internationally funded research projects since 1998. He has numerous publications in international scientific refereed journals and conferences; his research interests focus on crisis management communications, sustainable tourism development and tourism and hospitality management.

Dr Eleni (Elina) Michopoulou is an associate professor in business management at University of Derby, Buxton. Her research interests include technological applications and information systems in tourism, online consumer behaviour and technology acceptance, accessible and wellness tourism and hospitality. She is the European editor for the *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*. She has over 50 publications in a variety of outlets including books and high impact journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Current Issues in Tourism* and *Information and Management*. She regularly acts as a reviewer for a number of top tier academic journals and serves on the editorial board of ten of them.

Contact:

University of Sunderland Department of Tourism, Hospitality & Events, Sir Tom Cowie Campus, St Peters Way, SR6 0DD, Sunderland, UK.

E-mail: [Nikolaos.pappas@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:Nikolaos.pappas@sunderland.ac.uk)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8838-017X>

University of Derby, Center for Contemporary Hospitality and Tourism, 1 Devonshire Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6 RY, UK.

E-mail: [E.michopoulou@derby.ac.uk](mailto:E.michopoulou@derby.ac.uk)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1857-4462>