Social Innovation Research Group

2nd Annual Symposium

Wednesday 22nd January 2025

Aberystwyth University (and online)

Symposium proceedings

Editorial
Welcome to the second annual Social Innovation Research Group (SIRG) Symposium held at Aberystwyth University. We are delighted to welcome presenters and symposium delegates from across Wales and from Austria.

The symposium has the following objectives:

- To share research outputs which support social innovation practitioners and/or academic researchers in their work.
- To contribute to an evidence-based research culture, in particular to use the symposium to develop potential REF case studies.
- To provide opportunities for research staff and students to share their research, receive feedback and contribute to the culture of research at the University.
- To support the development of research outputs which meet the requirements of the University's Research Excellence Framework submission.

The papers delivered at this year's symposium consider a wide variety of subject matter from nostalgia tourism in Mürzzuschlag, to the economic regeneration of Aberystwyth and Holywell, and from active travel promotion to Welsh community asset transfers.

Symposium proceedings

Editor: Dr Lyndon Murphy

January 2025

Contents

Active travel promotion and uptake in rural communities

Marco Arkesteijn, Aberystwyth University.
maa36@aber.ac.uk

Keywords; ageing, mobility, physical activity, older adults, social inclusion

Introduction
The UK and Welsh Governments are promoting active travel not only to promote people's health, but also to work towards net-zero emission targets. The primary (research) focus however seems to be the large cities, rather than rural areas and communities.

Previous research
Despite all the investments in active travel in Wales, the numbers suggest this has not increased the uptake of active travel. A recent systematic review identified that for active travel infrastructure changes to make more impact, it benefits to embed a social/behavioural element. Activities such as grocery shopping, socialising, hobbies, community gardening, and other appointments could be appropriate to include at least some portion of active travel. However, for older adults and individuals with a disability, the distance, their current health-status, time, combined with poor infrastructure can be considerable barriers.

Research proposal: This project wants to explore the role of the (rural) community voice/perspective in active travel promotion and adoption. The focus on rural communities is in the very early stages of development. The ambition is to evaluate upcoming local interventions around active travel. For example, to collate baseline data in area of future active travel investment. Then follow up after the implementation. It would be nice to take an approach covering multiple elements, including health, well-being, mobility, social, and community perspectives. There might be the option to compare different locations across Ceredigion for comparison, to scope out different communities' views on active travel in their rural environment.

Sustainable Value Chain and Business Networks

Julie Jones, Aberystwyth University
Jum1@aber.ac.uk

Abstract

The sustainable value chain framework aims to build on previous value chains. Firstly, Michael Porter's value chain which focuses on an organisation's internal processes (usually manufacturing based) that create value in the form of revenue and profits (Porter 2001). Secondly, Francis Buttle's CRM value chain which focuses externally on the customer and driving long term customer lifetime value through being customer and market focused (Buttle 2001). With the focus today on the environment and becoming sustainable in environmental terms, this new value chain focuses on how an organisation can become sustainable in itself and also aid external stakeholders in their sustainability goals.

The overarching principle is that businesses do not work alone. They will be in some form of supply chain or business network. Like any chains, a supply chain is only as strong as its weakest link and where all forms of sustainability are concerned, it pays to work with others in the chain or network to increase overall strength. When determining business sustainability all three value chains can work well together to ensure that an organisation is in the 'thrive' quadrant of the Effectiveness/Efficiency matrix and is not only environmentally sustainable but also profitable long term.

The chains work together in a way that aids organisations with circular economy initiatives as a starting point for full sustainability.

This is not a research paper, rather the development of a new framework that can help businesses ensure that their sustainability and circular economy credentials are leading them to net zero goals.

References

Buttle, F.A., 2001. The CRM Value Chain. *Marketing Business*.
Porter, M.E., 2001. The value chain and competitive advantage. *Understanding business processes*, *2*, pp.50-66.

Cultivation Theory, Climate Change, and Tourist Behaviour

Emmet McLoughlin, Cardiff Metropolitan University
emcloughlin@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Abstract
This study examines the intersection of media influence, climate change, and tourism behaviour through the lens of cultivation theory. Cultivation theory speculates that prolonged media exposure shapes perceptions of reality, often reinforcing skewed or stereotypical views (Shrum, 2017; Gerbner et al., 2020). In tourism, such mediated representations significantly influence destination images, which in turn drive tourist decision-making (Chu et al., 2022; Velikova et al, 2023).

Media portrayals of destinations as unsafe or unstable, due to political unrest, crime, or environmental risks can deter tourism flows (Issac & Eid, 2019), often perpetuating misconceptions that distort reality and limit economic opportunities. Climate change further aggravates these challenges by directly impacting destination ecosystems, infrastructure, and visitor experiences (Arabadzhyan et al. 2021; Lee & Jan 2024). Ironically, tourism, while championed as a driver of economic development in many regions, is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions through activities such as air travel. This accelerates environmental degradation, jeopardising the very resources upon which tourism depends. Despite growing recognition of these vulnerabilities, sustainable tourism practices often remain inconsistent and superficial, hindered by a focus on short-term economic gains rather than long-term environmental resilience. Through an online quantitative survey, this research will explore how media exposure shapes tourists' perceptions and behaviours concerning climate change and sustainability. Findings from this research will aim to deepen our understanding of the media's role in cultivating awareness and influencing sustainable practices. While also highlighting the need for actionable strategies to align tourism development with climate resilience, fostering a balanced approach to economic growth and environmental stewardship.

References
Arabadzhyan, A., Figini, P., García, C., González, M. M., Lam-González, Y. E., & León, C. J. (2021). Climate change, coastal tourism, and impact chains: A literature review. Current Issues in Tourism, 24(16), 2233–2268.

Chu, Q., Bao, G., & Sun, J. (2022). Progress and prospects of destination image research in the last decade. Sustainability, 14(17), 10716.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorelli, N. (2020). Cultivation Theory. The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Society.

Isaac, R. K., & Eid, T. A. (2019). Tourists' destination image: an exploratory study of alternative tourism in Palestine. Current Issues in Tourism, 22(12), 1499-1522.

Lee, T. H., & Jan, F. H. (2024). How the perception of climate change impacts sustainable tourism: empirical evidence from Taiwan. Current Issues in Tourism, 1-17.

Shrum, L.J. (2017). Cultivation Theory: Effects and Underlying Processes.

Velikova, N., Charters, S., & Cogan-Marie, L. (2023). Destination image and the perceptions of regional iconic goods. Current Issues in Tourism, 1-16.

Zine creation in practice - surfacing interpretations of economic regeneration and community development needs.

Lyndon Murphy (Aberystwyth University, (lym18@aber.ac.uk), Aryan Salhenegger-Niamir (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt and Aberystwyth University) Matthew Price (Aberystwyth University), Katrin Salhenegger-Niamir (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt and Aberystwyth University), Gayle Rogers (Workers Gallery).

Introduction
The project is designed to build and maintain collaborative relationships, and scope out a tripartite town centre economic regeneration and community development research project to be co-led by Aberystwyth University and the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt. The proposed activity is to hold two events running concurrently one at Aberystwyth University and another at the Mürzzuschlag Gemeinderat (a local authority in Austria) facilitated in partnership with the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt. Collaborative Workshop A1- will be held in Aberystwyth with Aberystwyth and Holywell based local business owner/managers, staff from Aberystwyth University, and members of Holywell town council, Aberystwyth Town Council and staff from Ceredigion County Council. Collaborative Workshop A2 - will held in Mürzzuschlag, Austria with local business owner/managers, staff from the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt and members of the local economic development and tourism teams from the Mürzzuschlag Gemeinderat.

Research methods
The events will run concurrently involving the use of zine creation (Melik et al, 2024; Sou and Hall, 2024) to help surface interpretations of the challenges facing economic regeneration and community development activities in the towns of Aberystwyth, Holywell, and Mürzzuschlag.

The use of zines to creatively analyse and evaluate economic regeneration is a comparatively recently adopted phenomenon. Zine making is a research method which enables participation and helps surface conversations which may not emerge from traditional interview led research methods or focus groups (Melik et al, 2024). The Aberystwyth and Mürzzuschlag based workshops will employ zine creation to explore local narratives, cultural identity, socio-economic issues. Inspired by initiatives like "Madzines" (Spandler and Poursanidou, 2019) both workshops will encourage participants to creatively express their experiences, particularly focused on their experiences of economic regeneration and community development.

Anticipated outcomes
By creating the zines as cultural texts, we can analyse how business owner/managers, local authority officers, and residents depict their socio-economic realities, values, and challenges. The workshops will serve as a platform for an ongoing creative dialogue. We will collaborate with local organizations to ensure the workshops are accessible and relevant, and the outcomes will be shared through community exhibitions and publications. This approach will provide new insights into the economic regeneration and community development in Aberystwyth, Holywell, and Mürzzuschlag while empowering participants through creative expression. The workshops will support the collaboration between project stakeholders in Wales and Austria. It is anticipated that a member of the Aberystwyth University based team will travel to Mürzzuschlag to help facilitate Workshop A2 and continue building collaborative relationships with the research team in Austria.

Feedback from the workshop events will be received via a participatory dissemination exercise (Valli, 2012) where project stakeholders will use zines to provide their interpretations of the

outcomes emerging from Workshops A1 and A2. This exercise will help interpret whether the activities have achieved the aim of building and maintaining collaborative relationships and scoping out the research project parameters.

References

Sou, G. & Hall, S. (2023). Comics and Zines for Creative Research Impact: Ethics, Politics and Praxis in Geographical Research. ACME, 22(1), 817–841.

Spandler, H. and Poursanidou, D. (2019) Who's included in the Mad Studies Project? *Journal of Ethics in Mental Health*. V1

Van Melik, R., Kofi, J. & Landau-Donnelly, F. (2024) Studying and stimulating a sense of community through co-productive zine-making in public libraries. *Area*, 56.

Valli, C. (2021) Participatory dissemination: bridging in-depth interviews, participation, and creative visual methods through Interview-Based ZineMaking (IBZM). *Fennia* 199(1).

The Role of Nostalgia in Enhancing Heritage Tourism: A Case Study of Mürzzuschlag, Austria

Katrin Salhenegger-Niamir and Aryan Salhenegger-Niamir (both University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt and Aberystwyth University)
Lead author email - kas138@aber.ac.uk

Introduction
This paper explores how nostalgia-driven strategies can enhance heritage tourism, focusing on Mürzzuschlag, Austria. Objectives include identifying key factors that engage visitors emotionally and assessing the role of cultural and historical assets in fostering sustainable tourism.

Background
Nostalgia in tourism connects visitors to authentic past experiences and cultural heritage, shaping emotional and intellectual engagement. Mürzzuschlag, a town renowned for its industrial and cultural history, features landmarks such as the UNESCO-listed Semmering Railway and four museums, including an art house. These assets present significant opportunities for nostalgia-based tourism.

Research Approach
A mixed-methods methodology was employed, integrating interviews with the council, alongside desk-based research analysing academic literature, marketing strategies, various tourism-related websites and grey literature.

Discussion
Results indicate that nostalgia is a powerful tool for attracting diverse audiences, particularly through historical narratives and immersive experiences. Mürzzuschlag's museums, including the SÜDBAHN Museum, WinterSportMuseum, Brahmsmuseum and Kunsthaus Mürz effectively blend cultural heritage with interactive storytelling. However, challenges such as limited inter-regional collaboration and resource constraints hinder growth. Proposed initiatives include enhancing already existing initiatives, expanding collaborations, considering thematic festivals to expand visitor engagement and a new branding strategy.

Conclusions/Implications
Nostalgia enhances Mürzzuschlag's appeal as a heritage destination, fostering both cultural preservation and economic sustainability. Collaborative marketing strategies and investment in infrastructure are critical to positioning the town as a leading player in heritage tourism. These findings contribute to broader discussions on the intersection of emotional engagement and sustainable tourism development.

References
Brunner, A. (2024) *Mürzzuschlag Stadtmarketing - Strategie 2035*. Mürzzuschlag: Mürzzuschlag Agentur.
Earl, A. & Hall, C.M., 2023. Nostalgia and tourism. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 18(3), pp.307-317.
Harfst, J., Sandriester, J., and Fischer, W. (2021) 'Industrial Heritage Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development? A Case Study of Steirische Eisenstrasse (Austria)', *Sustainability*, 13 (7), 3857.

Timothy, D.J. and Boyd, S.W. (2006) 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century: Valued Traditions and New Perspectives', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1(1), pp. 1–16.

A mixed methods approach to critically evaluating participation (and non-participation) in Community Asset Transfers in Wales – A Welsh Social Enterprise Perspective

Gary Samuel, Cardiff Metropolitan University, gsamuel@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Keywords: Social enterprise, community asset transfers, CAT, localism

Introduction: Purpose

The purpose of this abstract is to discuss progress with the research for a Doctor of Management programme of study to evaluate the rationale for participation and particularly non-participation by social enterprises in Community Asset Transfers (CAT) in Wales.

Discussion

There are a number of studies and reports which consider and evaluate community asset transfers including Thomas and Trier (2016); Findlay-King et al. (2018); Hobson et al. (2019) and more recently the Welsh Government (2021) and the Welsh Parliament (2022). There are also a number of studies which attempt to provide a comprehensive map of the asset transfer landscape in the UK; notably Quirk (2007), Aiken et al. (2011) and, in Wales, Thomas and Trier (2016) and Building Communities Trust (2020). And yet the focus of these studies is organisations that are participating, or have participated, in community asset transfers, with the aim principally to identify the benefits of assets transfers and the barriers and enablers to a successful application. Whilst the extant body of literature focuses on participating organisations, significantly it overlooks those organisations not participating in asset transfers and the rationale for this.

Implications for Proposed Research Methodology

There may be as many as 1,700 social enterprises operating in Wales (Wales Co-operative Centre, 2017) and undoubtedly most social enterprises are not participating in CAT. There is an argument therefore supporting the need for further research to analyse the factors shaping decision making for both participating and non-participating organisations. A three-phase research design has been adopted comprising initial pilot interviews (completed) with a community organisation having recently participated in a successful asset transfer. Phase two will involve the use of Q-Methodology with both participating and non-participating social enterprises and phase three semi-structured interviews.

Conclusion

Despite the recent additions to the research on community asset transfers, there still appears to be a lacuna in the literature, most notably relating to those organisations (social enterprises) not participating in this initiative, and which warrants further investigation to understand the reasons for this, and potential organisational and policy implications thereof.

References

Aiken, M., Cairns, B., Taylor, M., and Moran, R. (2011) *Community organisations controlling assets: a better understanding*. Available at https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/community-organisations-assets-full.pdf (Accessed: 22nd March 2022).

Building Communities Trust (2020) Mapping Community Assets in Wales. Available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62554a379dc7e96b0ee4c256/t/63c12d36b5a7674da5b3cd5f/1673604409327/2020-12-08-14-1-mapping-community-assets-in-wa.pdf (Accessed: 20th May 2022).

Findlay-King, L., Nichols, G., Forbes, D. and MacFadyen, G. (2018) 'Localism and the Big Society: the asset transfer of leisure centres and libraries - fighting closures or empowering communities?', *Leisure Studies*, 37(2), pp.158-170.

Hobson, J., Lynch. K., Roberts, H. and Payne, B. (2019) 'Community Ownership of Local Assets: Conditions for sustainable success', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 65(2019) pp.116 – 125.

Quirk, B. (2007) *Making Assets Work: The Quirk review of community management and ownership of assets*. Available at https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920045030/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/321083.pdf (Accessed: 12th January 2022).

Thomas, M. and Trier, E. (2016) *Evaluation of the Community Asset Transfer Programme: Stage 3 Interim Evaluation Final Report*, CMI/Big Lottery Fund.

Wales Co-operative Centre (2017) *Mapping the Social Business Sector in Wales*. Available at http://sewfonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Social-Business-Mapping-Report-28FINAL29-2017.pdf (Accessed: 1st March 2022).

Welsh Government (2021) *Community asset transfer: research with the third sector, local authorities and community and town councils*. Available at https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-03/community-asset-transfer-research-with-the-third-sector-local-authorities-and-community-and-town-councils.pdf (Accessed: 5th May 2022).

Welsh Parliament (2022) *Community Assets.* Available at https://senedd.wales/media/1w2fvmna/cr-ld15392-e.pdf (Accessed: 20th June 2023).