Nicholas Wise
Glasgow Caledonian University, Department of Business Management

Landscape Remembrance, Fading Memory, and Replacing Memory: Conceptualizing Destination Image and Place Imaginations, Post-War

The following commentary presents an abstract way of analyzing post-war countries and tourism pertaining destination image and place imagination. This paper discusses the use of a three conceptualizations used in previous research focusing on post-war tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia. The three means for interpretation are detailed below as landscape remembrance, fading memory and replacing memory. Moreover, this paper suggests the need for further research addressing issues of remembrance, fading and replacing memory in other topically related post-war destinations.

Nicholas Wise
Glasgow Caledonian University
Department of Business Management
W704 Hamish Wood Building
Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow G4 0BA, Scotland
UK
Phone: [+44] 0141 273 1918
Email: Nicholas.Wise@gcu.ac.uk

Nicholas Wise is Lecturer in Sport and Events Management at Glasgow Caledonian University. His scholarly interests include recreation and tourism geographies dealing with place identities and imaginations. He has conducted several media analyses on destination image, most recently on Dubrovnik, and has also started working on research on tourism potential in the Vojvodina Region of Serbia.

Research on post-war tourism has developed into a popular topic of inquiry over the last decade (e.g. Figal, 2008; Fyall *et al*., 2006; Kanso, 2005; Vitic & Ringer, 2007; Winter, 2008; Wise, 2011). Wars and conflicts alter destinations images, and as such, images of devastating events are often portrayed by the media, producing negative imaginations. To a tourism destination, the transitional period following war often results in two scenarios. Sometimes places are forced to use evidence from the war or conflict as a way of attracting visitors to educate them about the event, a brand of war-tourism. Alternatively, places attempt to forge a new identity by phasing out imaginations of war, replacing and rapidly distancing

that memory and association (Foote, 2003). The purpose of the following commentary is to briefly review a conceptual way of analyzing post-war countries and tourism research. Such abstractions focus on destination image and ways of understanding how places are imagined through textual discourse, specifically newspaper and web content. As such, this commentary overviews conceptualizations of place memory presented in previous tourism research, focusing on: landscape remembrance, fading memory, and replacing memory (see Wise, 2011).

Conceptualizations addressing landscape remembrance, fading memory and replacing memory present critical insight for researchers. When researching post-war tourism, it is crucial to identify the extent a previous war has on a country's contemporary tourism agenda, and how such context in portrayed via media content. In reviewing this approach, methodologically, previous research assessed textual content supplemented by a visual analysis to identify representations of war, heritage and tourism. Moreover, these conceptualizations assist in identifying how contrasting types of tourism discourses have (re)created or (re)constructed the imaginative geographies of post-war destination images. When the media content puts emphasis on war, this generates semblances of fear. Thus, imaginations created through textual (printed and any visual) content dialogue and depict images of violence and devastation—thereby, often deterring visitors to the destination. The rebranding of place identities, per se, is an aim to reconstruct an imagination that is welcoming to future tourists using images that put much attention on, for example, natural scenery, heritage or culture. Often times memories of war are incorporated into texts but use more educational opposed to fearful tactics of presentation (see Wise & Mulec, 2012).

The contribution proposed in this paper aims to classify where countries fit, based on how they are communicated to various international audiences. Questions that influenced the production of landscape remembrance, fading memory and replacing memory include: how

do representations of war, memory and destination image vis-à-vis textual communication (re)present a particular place? Moreover, how does the discourse attempt to eliminate references of war and conflict and to what extent does such content transition focus to cultural and physical attributes? With such queries in mind, the following contributes to the growing literature on post-war tourism by addressing multiple representations of memory being produced and consumed, thereby transcending destination images and place imaginations.

Tourism is increasing globally, and many places that may not have been popular destinations in the past, or have seen tourism industries undergo recession resulting from some previous conflict, are seeking for the first time, or once again, respectively, to represent their storied pasts. Landscape remembrance refers to integrating or educating tourists about the events that transpired during the recent conflict. This could also be referred to as 'war tourism' (e.g. Lloyd, 1998; McCarthy, 2004), or in some instances dark tourism (e.g. Lennon & Foley, 2000). Such forms of tourism involve the significances of constructed monuments, storied places or manifested memorials as part of the narrative. Moreover, such landscape features represent the remembrance of tragic events first hand (Foote, 2003). Landscape remembrance designates reflections of war envisioning the past, as sometimes landscapes are left untouched. Scenes conveying war-torn landscapes allow future travelers to reminisce past imaginations of a particular place, as it was presented and visualized through media texts. Therefore, landscape remembrance results from not fully redeveloping or restoring a destinations image, post-war simply becomes a time to reflect upon recent conflict. By leaving the landscape as is, and continuing narratives of the conflict as part of the tourism agenda, this presents visitors' with insight into the past and in many cases further educates them about the war or conflict.

The second conceptualization, fading memory, involves some recognition of a conflict; however, this focus emphasizes transition, as discussions of war are positioned alongside an emphasis on the future as time elapses since the period of conflict. Fading memory is often times positioned between remembering and forgetting (see Müller, 2002; Whitehead, 2009). Representing transition, the media and other such forms of discourse continue narrating the past, but details and contexts change once significant redevelopments commence even if memories of the past remain. Although redevelopments and subsequent investments attempt to fade previous violence, this is the initial stage where destination images begin alteration towards (re)creating the imaginative geographies of the destination, or country. It remains difficult for war-torn destinations to rapidly recover, so this transitional process of fading memory continues to host links to associated histories, while addressing changes until memories of war have been replaced (see Wise & Mulec, 2012).

The final designation, replacing memory, involves phasing out the past and replacing negative histories with an emphasis on current changes, recoveries and future projections. In many cases, destinations and countries will make use of official tourism websites to brand a new place identity replacing negative images by focusing on more positive attributes, such as physical and cultural amenities, to elapse images of fear and vulnerability. Other scholars have referred to this as obliterating, removing or erasing memory (e.g. Foote, 2003; Tyner, 2009; Zuelow, 2009). In some instances, the landscape still shows signs of the past. Many popular destinations tend to steer clear of negative images and associated narratives of war in media advertisements or tourism websites. For example, in the case of Dubrovnik, assessed newspaper content from 1991 to 2010 showed significant declines with minimal or no discussions of war since the mid-2000s (Wise & Mulec, 2012). The media focused attention on tourism highlights and images in an attempt to replace memories of the conflict that devastated the destination in the early-1990s. This not only improves a destinations image, it

also becomes a strategic marketing technique that attempts to promote an image of overcoming past struggles showing how tourism is fostering future economic and cultural sustainability (Fyall *et al.*, 2006).

The motive for such an analysis resulted from previous research identifying transitions in media content, assessing BiH and Croatia as case studies. The conflicts during the early 1990s shaped many of the geographical imaginations and perceptions of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result, war tourism has been a particular theme in several destinations across BiH, symbolizing landscape remembrance. Alternatively, in Croatia, many destinations within the country are focusing on current and future agendas, attempting to fade and replace memories of conflict that burdened the country's tourism industry during the early 1990s. Interestingly, when seeking media outlets focusing on BiH and Croatia, there is generally some reference to the past suggesting remembrance, but many create a sense that those past memories of war and conflict are fading. When analyzing online web based content, in regards to both countries, there is an emphasis on the future to replace and represent images, forging nascent identities highlighting natural scenic amenities and traditional folk culture and heritage.

Although the three noted conceptualizations initially emerged from an analysis of newspaper and web based content, much more depth and scope needs explored, methodologically, through surveys and in-depth interviews with locals, industry officials and tourists visiting post-war destinations. Furthermore, landscape remembrance, fading memory, and replacing memory represent insight when addressing transition and the branding of new destination images and identities. Moreover, there is potential to apply landscape remembrance, fading memory and replacing memory to numerous case studies focusing on emerging destinations recovering from troubled pasts.

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