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## How Does Smart City Concept Apply to The Leading Destination? The Case Study of Istanbul

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### Abstract

The idea of smart city is considered as an emerging concept that most of the world cities try to adapt in recent years. Understanding the need and recognizing the potential of smartness for the adaptation of a rapid change in technology, not only governments, but also private and public institutions began to combine smart concept with new strategies and policies to improve economic growth and sustainable development. In this manner, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) take the initial role for the systematic enhancement of the cities. ‘Smart Tourism Destination’ idea stems from the smart city concept and the world’s leading tourism destinations apply this concept into their marketing strategies. In this research, Istanbul will be analyzed as a case study of smart destinations. The interview method will be applied to put a detailed research on how Istanbul manages and applies smart city concept as a leading tourism destination while attracting averagely 11 million international visitors every year.

**Keywords:** Information and Communication Technologies, Smart Cities, Tourism Destinations, Internet of Things, Smart Tourism Applications

### Highlights

- To show how Istanbul, as a leading tourism destination, creates high-tech systems to transform itself into a smart city tourism destination and contend in the worldwide knowledge-based economy while addressing the research questions mentioned in this paper,
- To protect Istanbul’s unique place as a cultural and historical center, which is important from a national and global perspective, and thus makes it imperative to preserve its unique identity through smart policies and measures,
- To break the image of Istanbul on international media. The city is still considered to offer as a traditional or old-style services and facilities in the eye of the visitors.
- To analyze the growing urban sustainability concerns such as air pollution, resource depletion, chronic mobility and traffic problems, environmental degradation, urban sprawl which calls for smarter intervention mechanisms and frameworks,
- As this research was conducted in Istanbul where Asian culture is predominantly seen, the results of the study can be applied to the western-focused culture (ie. Southeastern US) and could be the case to benefit the local community.

### Introduction

The concept of smartness found its roots back in the 90s, but it has been growing significantly after 2008. Firstly, the term was invented as a complex technological infrastructure placed in urban areas to promote social, environmental as well as economic well-being. More specifically,

in order to allude to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) application to the cities' infrastructure system, the concept of "smart" was firstly utilized in 1990s by the California Institute of Smart Communities, one of the primary agencies that investigate how a community could be intended to be smart. A few years later, the Centre on Governance at the University of Ottawa expanded the application of the term to include a governance-focused approach rather than merely emphasizing ICTs. Since, the "smart" concept has clung to the academia, it has swiftly become a phenomenon for the private sector and governments.

Therefore, the concept of a smart city is an idea whose time has come. It is an idea that the city planners must deeply understand because it will perhaps be a panacea to the problems of the urban areas through ensuring livable conditions even with the population explosion witnessed in these urban spaces. The several challenges that the cities around the globe pose have jolted all the stakeholders into thinking of smarter ways to overcome such challenges. All these ways have been inculcated into the concept of a smart city. As a result, a smart city is defined as a city in which ICTs have been integrated into the traditional infrastructure through the utilization of technological advancements (Batty et al. 2012). A smart city has a main objective of developing an effective system in addressing the urban challenges in a feasible manner through coordinated technological frameworks, techniques, models for using urban data across temporal and partial scale as well as conscious development of new technologies to achieve dissemination and communication ends. Moreover, the smart city targets enhancing urban governance, organizational structures and identifying common problems relating to the cities' infrastructure, energy, risks, transport, hazards and other problems (Batty et al. 2012). The concept of a smart city is a term in high circulation within the scholarly world but a thorough understanding of what it really entails has not been clearly understood among the academia and the professionals. This is evidenced by a few existing studies that systematically explore this area.

Having a rapidly growing population which is currently around 14.8 million people, Istanbul grapples with many urban challenges such as urban transport, energy, infrastructure and environmental pollution. Smart city concept is considered by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) as a useful approach to tackle these issues. IMM undertook the smart city project at the beginning of 2017. A variety of stakeholders including public agencies, private companies, local communities, NGOs, academia is included in the project. Aiming to make Istanbul a Smart City Tourism Destination, the needs, demands and expectations of the inhabitants as well as the visitors are sought to be incorporated. Almost 11 million international tourists visited Istanbul in 2017 and the tourism sector is critical in Istanbul to boost the local and national economy. Thus, the main research questions guiding this study were:

- Question 1: How can Istanbul and its governmental authorities direct this smart city transformation? And, what can be the fundamental drivers and restrictions for this change?
- Question 2: Which infrastructures can be needed to become a Smart City or a Smart Tourism Destination?
- Question 3: What kind of collaboration strategies should be developed with the city stakeholders (NGOs, governmental authorities and private bodies) during the process of becoming a smart city?

It must be noted that the concept of a smart city is still new, and its definition and conceptualization is still developing (Boulton et al. 2011; Hollands 2008). Various definitions nonetheless have been put forth both in academic and practical spheres in an attempt to effectively define this term (see the Table 1 below).

**Table 1**  
**Definitions of Smart City**

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Sources</b>
A smart city is a city that coordinates, integrates and monitors the entire critical infrastructure such as water and power, seaports, communications, airports, subways, rails, tunnels and road bridges within its perimeters in order to optimize efficiency and performance.	Hall (2000)
A smart city is a city that shares a culture, inspirations, life and knowledge. This is a city that enables its inhabitants to develop and utilize their creativity to progress and live comfortably.	Porter et al. (2002)
A smart city is a city that utilizes ICTs to enhance its inhabitants' freedoms (such as of speech) and liberties as well as facilitates access to services and information.	Partridge (2004)
A smart city is a city responsive to the people's needs and promising a better future for its inhabitants in economy, governance and people, mobility, better living and environment because it is premised on a combination of activities and strengths such as building self-decisive and informed citizenry.	Giffinger, Kramar and Haindl (2010)
A smart city is a city that employs smart commuting technologies to develop more sustainable and livable conditions for its inhabitants by integrating the critical infrastructural components and services including utilities, transportation, real estate, public safety, healthcare, education, and city administration.	Washburn et al. (2010)
A smart city is a city that integrates Web2.0 technology and ICTs with other design, organizational and planning efforts to speed up the systems as well as demystify bureaucratic processes so that new and innovative solutions to the challenges posed by urban complexities are facilitated in order to better the living standards of the inhabitants.	Toppeta (2010)
A smart city is an interconnected, instrumentalized, and intelligent city.	Harrison et al. (2010)
A smart city is a city in which there is a conscious and dedicated commitment to invest in social and human capital as well as in both modern communication (ICTs) and traditional infrastructures to enhance a high quality of life and fuel economic growth through prudent management of natural resources and involvement of all stakeholders.	Thite (2011)
A smart city is a city with geographically defined area with advanced	Dameri (2013)

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technologies such as energy production, ICTs and logistic production among others, which work collaboratively to better the lives of citizens in areas such as inclusion, well-being, participation, intelligent development and quality of environment. All these elements are coordinated through a well-established system in terms of rules and policy.

A smart city is a city in which technological advancements make a bold statement through elaborate ICT systems, which have the capacity to provide high quality services to its citizens with a view to improving their life. Piro et al. (2014)

A smart city is characterized by a number of factors such a focus on economic and creative activities to promote urban development, an emphasis on environmental sustainability, a focus on social inclusivity and social capital and effective and networked infrastructure that allows for social, political and economic expediency. Albino et al. (2015)

A smart city can attract human capital and to move this human capital based on needs basis in conjunction with other factors such as individual and organized actors with heavy reliance of ICTs. Meijer & Bolivar (2015)

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### **Research Methodology**

To achieve the research objectives of this paper, a case study approach was applied. There are different ways to sampling participant in the qualitative case study approach. In this study, purposive sampling method was applied to reach out the relevant organizations and individuals to make sure the data collected were also in line with the specified research questions (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). Various data were collected, and secondary data were used at the same time through in-depth interviews with high-level managers of the city authorities such as the manager of Istanbul Electric Tramway and Tunnel Establishments (IETT), leaders from different NGOs being active specifically for smart city applications and secondary data are utilized. To achieve the stated goals, the study has the following structure: Firstly, the existing literature on Smart Cities, Smart Tourism and Smart Tourism Destination is reviewed.

With a detailed definition of the case study analysis, the main elements of Istanbul's Smart Tourism Destination Strategy are examined. Afterwards, the advantages and disadvantages of being a Smart Tourism Destination and its future objectives are stated. Lastly, this study is concluded with different views produced from the case study results. Within this research, five in-depth interviews were conducted with the municipality representatives and international non-governmental organizations such as International Road Union (IRU) and the International Centre for Integrated Urban Planning and Transport (ICIUPT). Interviewees were connected through a virtual channel (ie. Skype) as there were some limitations in terms of location and time. This study specifically aims to show how Istanbul, as a leading tourism destination, creates high-tech systems to transform itself into a smart city tourism destination and contend in the worldwide knowledge-based economy.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, there are many concerns and factors that the city authorities need to consider on the way to create a real smart city. As a first step, Istanbul needs to collect all the smart city projects

and works that have been done so far to create an integrated and innovative roadmap to move further on the way to be ‘Smart Tourism Destination’.

Other significant point needed to be taken into consideration is that strategic partnerships with different stakeholders should be developed. Very few destinations have a good strategic long-term plan on how to become a smart tourism destination. Istanbul, as one of the leading tourism destinations, should improve its organizational structure and it should be created dedicated policies on how to achieve this by building an advisory board consisting of smart technologies professionals, city officials etc.

The progress in smart city implementation should be measured with objective performance indicators as well as subjective perception or satisfaction surveys. The outcomes of the sub-projects should be measured together with the performance scores to understand whether the projects achieved the targets. In terms of project management, the components of the smart city project should be prioritized and the relationships amongst them should be clearly defined. For example, smart urban mobility can be prioritized over the other dimensions such as energy, environment or waste management, depending on the opinions of the stakeholders. To achieve this, several multi- criteria decision-making methods such as analytical hierarchy process (AHP), TOPSIS or ELECTRE can be used to determine the ranking among the dimensions (Canitez & Deveci, 2018). Employing such a method provides a participatory framework which is in alignment with the core values of the smart city concept. Moreover, it facilitates the decision-making process for the policy makers in choosing the most feasible course of action and for the project practitioners in implementing the planned project steps. It is critically important to consider the appropriate application framework besides the content of the smart city project. Unless such a framework is in place, the targets may fail to be attained even if they are well designed and well planned.

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## Utilizing Lived Experiences in Rural Tourism Development Research: A Case from Senegal

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### Highlights

- Rural tourism development worldwide is faced with challenges such as attracting valuable target markets and developing infrastructure that serves those markets.
- Participant observation can be utilized as a means of data collection to gather data that reveals needs related to target markets and infrastructure development.
- A structured approach to participant observation is provided to help those tasked with tourism development utilize this research method.

**Background:** Rural areas across the globe seek to utilize tourism as an economic development strategy (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). For many rural communities, tourism provides a sustainable way to increase and strengthen the local economy and bring revenue into the area. This is particularly true in developing nations like Senegal (Samimi, Sadeghi, & Sadeghi, 2011) where tourism has the potential to increase jobs and spending while protecting natural and cultural resources (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). Many communities in Senegal have started to develop tourism amenities such as lodges, tours, and restaurants as a way to start building infrastructure to encourage tourism in the area. Yet, this development also comes with its own challenges and it can be difficult to attract tourists to these developing destinations. This is also a common challenge faced in many of the rural communities located in the Southeast region of the United States. While these communities have many unique natural and cultural resources (Garrod, Wornell & Youell, 2006), it can still be a struggle for them to attract tourists to the area because they lack an effective means of promotion (Hall, Kirkpatrick & Mitchell, 2005). In rural communities, there is often a disconnect between the locals and the tourism industry which can present a disengagement and disinterest in development. However, local participation is vital for sustainable tourism development (Page & Getz, 1997). While community involvement is a key factor in development, it is also sometimes necessary to bring in an outside perspective to provide new insight into opportunities for change and growth. This insight can be given through the lived experiences of a researcher from outside the community (Bowen, 2002) and can provide a unique and fresh perspective that identifies improvements to tourism development and amenities in these rural areas.

**Objective:** The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate how participant observation can contribute to rural tourism development research. Through a case study from Senegal, this presentation aims to describe how a researcher's lived experiences can illuminate opportunities to overcome tourism development challenges faced by rural communities.

**Case Study:** This case study was performed in the village of Dindefelo located in the Kedougou region in southeast Senegal. The study focused on the Dindefelo community and the three separate campements within it. The site is home to a 100 meter high waterfall, a national chimpanzee reserve, and the Jane Goodall Institute. For many years, the region has been home to Peace Corps volunteers who are working with the local tourism actors to develop workshops that train them in the sustainable development of tourism and the local economy.

**Challenge:** The biggest challenge to tourism development in Dindefelo is a lack of knowledge among community members on how to effectively leverage the wide range of resources available within the community to attract tourists. For many of the campement owners, there is a disconnect between having lodging facilities and creating a space where they can attract tourists to the region. Similarly, they struggle to market their campements because there is a lack of understanding and definition of who the clientele is and what they desire from the accommodations and amenities. Dindefelo must also compete with the villages that are more easily accessible for incoming tourists and therefore have greater mobility for visitors to move around the region.

**Solution:** The research for this study was conducted through lived experiences that assessed the challenges and resources available within the region for tourism development. Data were collected using a three-stage process consisting of lived experience participation, data synthesis, and recommendation development, and presentation of data to tourism partners.

*Stage 1:* This stage consisted of the participation in Dindefelo's current tourism experiences and the interaction with the local community. These experiences included staying at the local campement lodgings, touring the Dindefelo Reserve, hiking to Dindefelo Falls, a guided chimpanzee tour, and visiting the local village market. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the destination were taken note of and examined during participation. After each experience, the participant observer and members of the Peace Corps met to critically analyze and make observations on the attraction or accommodations. Research was also conducted through the informal interviewing of the local campement owners and Jane Goodall Institute Members. A total of three interviews were conducted, two with campement owners and one with the director of the Jane Goodall Institute. Interviewees were chosen based on their availability and knowledge of Dindefelo and its tourism industry. During the interviews, notes were taken to record conversations and to be used for recommendation analysis.

*Stage 2:* Qualitative data collected through the lived experiences and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This allowed themes to emerge from the data related to recommendations for opportunities for improvements in Dindefelo's tourism product. Each experience was evaluated individually, and both its strengths and weaknesses were assessed to determine areas for improvement and recommendation. The themes for recommendations include: 1. The need for campement owners to establish target markets to reduce local competition. 2. An increase in the incorporation of the local community into tourism marketing, planning, and experiences. 3. The creation of local partnership between businesses in the region.

*Stage 3:* The final stage involved organizing a workshop to report these recommendations to key tourism players, current Peace Corps volunteers, and members from the Jane Goodall Institute in Dindéfelo and the surrounding villages in the region. After the data were presented along with the recommendations given above, workshop attendees brainstormed various ways in which to implement these recommendations.

**Recommendations:** The use of participant observation in the research that aimed to improve the amenities and promotion of tourism development in Senegal generated the following recommendations for research in other rural settings:

*Recommendation 1:* Research by an individual from outside the community should be conducted both through participation in the existing tourism experiences and interaction and via communication with local businesses and industry and community partners.

*Recommendation 2:* Evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses in the area before creating recommendations in order to ensure a holistic and well-rounded perspective is presented.

This study indicates that participant observation can provide valuable insight on how to improve tourism development efforts. Those tasked with increasing tourism development in rural areas of the Southeast can utilize these recommendations to gather data on tourism development opportunities.

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## 808 El Paso Food Truck Court: A Concept, a Sense of Place

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### **Highlights**

- Creating a sense of place for community
- Tourism research can aid in discovering what would benefit a college community
- Collaboration between community officials and other stakeholders in a research endeavor

The Center for Community Engagement and Academic Outreach on the campus of Arkansas Tech University works in collaboration with the city and state to provide service learning and research courses each semester. In Spring of 2018, an interdisciplinary, project based course (IPBL) entitled Food Design and You: Community Based Research. Student teams explored the possibility of a food truck court on EL Paso Avenue in Russellville that belongs to a local businessman. They performed focus groups, toured food truck courts and spaces in Northwest Arkansas, met with contractors and worked with city officials.

This was a high-impact course. It was designed to prepare students to obtain experiences and skills that are enhanced by hands-on learning:

- interdisciplinary collaboration
- verbal and written communication skills
- cultural experiences
- professionalism
- networking
- community and global engagement.

## An Investment That Lasts: Growing the Tourism Workforce Through Improved Internship Programs

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### Highlights

- The rapid growth of the tourism industry has led to increased workforce needs.
- Strategically developed internship programs can result in greater interest in pursuing future careers within the industry where the internship occurs.
- Tourism students at universities are typically required to complete internships, but with limited standards for their structure and content these internships may fail to inspire interest in future tourism careers.
- This study examines the internship experiences of tourism students to identify best practices for strategically developing internships.
- Internships that maximize the students' experience can generate a stronger workforce for members of the tourism industry in the Southeast and throughout the nation.

### Background

The hospitality industry is growing rapidly, and the need for the talented and educated workers in the tourism field is at an all time high. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) reported 910,000 job openings in the tourism industry as of September of 2019, indicating that there is a considerable need for growth in the tourism workforce.

Internship programs are one solution to growing the tourism workforce. Bandow (2015) notes that internships provide business owners with the opportunity to identify and nurture future employees. Such opportunities were also articulated in the documentation of internship development by a collection of institutes of higher education, who stated “developing an internship program is an excellent strategy for investing in your organization’s future successes, often leading to discovering future colleagues and leaders” (Bryant University, n.d.) Beyond contributing to an industry’s workforce internships provide a way for organizations to create a mutually beneficial relationship where business goals are achieved and the interns receive valuable learning experiences that can spark interest in a career in the industry. This is supported by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), who indicates that internships “give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”

University tourism programs can contribute to this workforce need, particularly for managerial level positions. Most of these programs require students to have an internship, but standards do not exist for the content or promotion of these internships. There is a disconnect between the availability of valuable internships in the tourism field and students’ awareness of them. Consequently, students who acquire an internship may be disappointed with the amount of busy work and limited learning opportunities during their experience. By failing to adequately

challenge and utilize interns organization can run the risk of causing students to lose interest in a future career in tourism, further exacerbating the limited tourism workforce.

Tourism organizations that provide internships are making a considerable investment of resources, and therefore should aim to maximize the impact of their investment. Organizations are not receiving cheap or free labor, they are nurturing and growing the future leaders of the tourism industry. The need for more tourism workforce members, the importance of internships in getting students to seek careers in the field, and the investment required by tourism organizations suggests that development of best practices in tourism internships is of value to the tourism industry as a whole, tourism organizations seeking to host internships, and future interns themselves.

### **Objective**

The purpose of this presentation is to identify best practices in providing a valuable internship experience in the tourism field. By achieving this purpose, the presentation will provide tourism organizations with specific actions they can take to improve their internship programs. Doing so will help tourism organizations maximize their appeal to tourism students seeking internships and will ensure that the internship is valuable both for the organization and the student.

### **Methods**

The population for the study this presentation will focus on includes students who have completed tourism internships in North Carolina. The sample will be obtained through chain referral sampling starting with students and alumni in the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management program at North Carolina State University.

The data collection method will be semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in person and over the phone. The interview protocol will include questions to yield data on topics such as:

1. channels of communication about internships;
2. internships requirements;
3. internship responsibilities;
4. internship compensation;
5. internship outcomes;
6. influence of internship on future goals and career path;
7. mentor and supervisor experience;
8. key takeaways from internship experience;
9. desires for future internships and learning environments.

The data collection will continue until saturation is complete and will be analyzed through thematic analysis which will allow themes to emerge from the data related to recruiting interns, elements of valuable learning experiences that prepares future tourism workers, and methods for utilizing interns to achieve organizational goals.

### **Expected Outcomes**

With an industry that is rapidly growing, the results of this study will provide a framework of best practices that tourism organizations can use in the establishment or improvement of their internship programs. These best practices for internship development will be presented both in

the form of a poster summarizing the student and through a one-sheet handout. The creation of valuable internship programs by tourism organizations can strengthen students' interest in tourism industry careers and will therefore increase the pipeline of new tourism workforce members, especially for management level positions.

Using interviews from interns on their experiences in the industry, tourism organizations will understand what interns want to gain from their internship and what channels are the most effective in reaching future tourism leaders. From this study, these organizations will be able to craft a mutually beneficial program that educates young professionals while also contributing to the organization's goals.

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## Initial Findings on the Use of Community Engagement Strategies to Cultivate Tourism Advocates

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### Highlights

- Provide a deeper understanding of why destination marketing organizations (DMO) should invest in effective community engagement strategies.
- Expand the knowledge of how stakeholders have the potential to be advocates for DMOs and the tourism industry.
- Increase understanding of stakeholder perceptions of the benefits of DMOs in their community.

### Study Context

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry and continues to be one of the leading economic drivers and job generators in the United States (USTA, 2018). As the industry grows more communities have come to rely upon it as an economic development strategy. Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) play a vital role in driving economic development through tourism by increasing visitation, attracting new tourism enterprises, and maximizing the positive impacts of tourism in the destination communities where it occurs. However, DMOs and the destination communities they serve are vulnerable to unpredictable events such as legislation changes or budget cuts (Yardley, 2011). Such changes in policy can result in decreased visitation, as seen in the early 1990s when the Colorado state legislature eliminated the state tourism office (Longwoods International, 2019). Decreases in visitation means destination communities may lose tourism revenue, jobs, and other positive impacts of the tourism industry. Increasingly DMOs are recognizing their role in the creation of advocates for the tourism industry to reduce the threat of political crises and their repercussions for destination communities (Destinations International, 2017). Advocacy, efforts to influence the policy decisions through means such as education of policymakers and voters, provides an avenue to reduce or eliminate political crises (Baumgartner et al, 2009). In order to increase the impact of tourism advocacy efforts, DMOs must cultivate a wide range of stakeholders who can serve as advocates who may help in reducing the threat of political crises.

Creating advocates ensures that when the tourism industry is in a vulnerable position (e.g., facing legislation changes or budget cuts) advocates of the industry will step in and voice their support for tourism's impact on a destination community. It is vital that DMOs develop their stakeholders as advocates through community engagement strategies (CES) which can effectively build relationships between a DMO and stakeholders. By utilizing CES (which can include encouraging a dialogue on social media, creating public events, or one-on-one meetings) DMOs can engage directly with stakeholders to encourage them to become active advocates and allows stakeholders to have their voices heard.

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (GRCVB) is the DMO for Wake County, North Carolina. Wake County is the second most populous county in North Carolina and is home to Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, and 11 other incorporated communities. The GRCVB promotes Wake County as a tourist destination and contributes to the sustainability of Wake County's economic development. Tourism is growing in Wake County with consistent increases in occupancy rates and tax revenues (GRCVB, 2018). In line with this growth the GRCVB is seeking to expand its connection with stakeholders across Wake County using community engagement strategies (CES). These strategies include one-on-one meeting with stakeholders, PR campaigns, and public meetings with a variety of stakeholder from different sectors of tourism, other industries, non-profit organizations, economic development offices, and others. Through the CES, the GRCVB aims to cultivate advocates among community stakeholders by increasing their awareness of the GRCVB and the benefits tourism brings to Wake County.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this work is to assess stakeholder perceptions of the GRCVB and provide a baseline measure of their potential for engaging in tourism advocacy. This baseline will allow for measurement of change in awareness of the GRCVB and advocacy potential generated by the GRCVB's CES. While this work will only report on these baseline measures, post-CES interviews will be conducted in Spring 2020 to capture stakeholder perceptions and advocacy intentions after they have been involved in the CES. By analyzing stakeholder's perceptions of the benefits of the GRCVB before and after the CES deployment, this work will provide a deeper understanding of how various stakeholder perceptions of the GRCVB's role in tourism in Wake County, their knowledge of impacts of tourism in Wake County, and their engagement in advocacy for tourism in Wake County. By reporting on the initial findings of this work this presentation will illustrate will provide a benchmark for other DMOs to utilize in assessing the status of their stakeholder engagement.

### **Methods**

Qualitative data, obtained through in-depth interviews, are used in this study to gain a rich understanding of stakeholders' awareness of the GRCVB and their advocacy intention. Interview questions elicited stakeholder perceptions of the role of tourism in Wake County economic development; knowledge of the impacts of tourism in Wake County; the GRCVB's engagement in advocacy for tourism in Wake County. Interview participants were identified through a database of community contacts maintained by the GRCVB. In selecting a purposive sample for this study, the contacts were organized by their community (e.g., Raleigh, Cary, Wake Forest) and stakeholder type (e.g., tourism sector, industry type, economic development office). The sample was comprised of at least one member from each of the 12 incorporated Wake County communities and at least one of each stakeholder type. A total of 40 stakeholders were invited to participate in the study. Ultimately, 22 stakeholders representing 7 communities and 13 stakeholder types participated in an interview. These interviews were transcribed and uploaded into NVivo software which was used to organize thematic analysis of the data. One member of the research team conducted the interviews and both members engaged in thematic analysis of the data, allowing themes to emerge from the data.

### Initial Findings

Thematic analysis of the data reveals that while the GRCVB has established awareness of their role among some stakeholders there is room for improvement in preparing stakeholders as advocates. Interview participants voiced strong **support for the GRCVB's role in economic development** as seen here from one Raleigh tourism sector stakeholder: "They drive the economic engine through their advocacy and selling the Greater Raleigh in Wake County area." Others, such as this Real Estate Industry member from Raleigh, recognize the role that the GRCVB plays in **creating a brand for the area**: "I think they enhance the brand...I think the Raleigh brand per se, has pretty well overtaken the Research Triangle brand. The Raleigh brand has gotten stronger, and stronger." There is also evidence that stakeholders see the GRCVB playing a role in **attracting specific events** that generate tourism and economic impact, such as the Wide Open Bluegrass Festival. Here, a Raleigh Economic Development Official describes the collective role of the GRCVB, "I think that there's a role in effectively by doing all of this work, helping communicate and start to coalesce who we are as a community, and also helping establish our own brands, so to speak. I think the Bluegrass festivals, are a really good example. The GRCVB has been a leader on them and they're integral." Combined, the presence of themes related to GRCVB's role in economic development, creating a brand, and attracting events demonstrates that many stakeholders have a positive perception of the GRCVB and comprehensive understanding of its role in Wake County. This suggests that there is potential for these stakeholders to accurately convey the importance of the GRCVB should a political crisis emerge that threatens its capacity to promote tourism in Wake County.

While the interviews reveal largely positive perceptions of the GRCVB there is evidence that efforts need to be made to improve stakeholders' potential for advocacy. Some stakeholders are primed for advocacy action, but **seek a specific ask** from the GRCVB on what action to take. Here a Raleigh Higher Education stakeholder references meetings of a recently disbanded engagement group organized by the GRCVB: "[The group meetings] were very informational. It was great information. I love being more knowledgeable on topics than I am to begin with, but a specific ask is kind of right up my alley...That information is good, but if there is a specific thing or a specific ask out of that, then, I love that." In this statement the participant references the need for a specific ask, or action, that they can engage in to assist the GRCVB. The interviews also reveal that there is a **need for the GRCVB to provide consistent messaging about the impacts of tourism**. When participants were asked to articulate impacts of tourism in Wake County they did not deliver a consistent message. This suggests that while many stakeholders have positive perceptions of the GRCVB, their advocacy potential is limited by the fact that they would not be speaking with a single, unified voice on the impacts of tourism in Wake County.

In addition to their perceptions of the GRCVB and advocacy potential themes can be found in the data that speak to opportunities for the GRCVB to strengthen their advocates in a variety of areas. First, participants see opportunities for the GRCVB to **increase their connection with communities in Wake County that have small, but growing populations**. One Economic Development Official from Apex stated "I would look... for them to look at our area as Wake County as a whole and say what are those areas that maybe would appeal to people?... to find the crown jewels of all the communities, what the crown jewels are within the communities surrounding the area and trying to highlight those areas to try to bring folks in". Interview data also reveal opportunities to **build relationships with entrepreneurs** as suggested by this Raleigh

Entrepreneur, “There are a bunch of people like me in the community that just happen to represent an organization that has a lot of reach. If that's the case, that can power us to help tell your story and I think that would just be having more readily available information. It's just a matter of being activated a little bit more officially, maybe...Being invited to something that's more of an ambassadorial kind of thing.” Both of these recommendations indicate that there is potential for the GRCVB to cultivate more advocates in a wider population of stakeholders such as smaller communities or entrepreneurs.

### Next Steps

The completion of this study will yield evidence of how CES can be used to change perceptions of tourism impacts and the role of DMOs among tourism stakeholders. The baseline measures reported in this presentation will be compared against the findings of interviews conducted after CES are employed in Spring 2020. Ultimately, the study aims to provide DMOs across the Southeast and the nation with evidence of how CES can be used to help improve advocacy for the tourism industry. Such improvements may help to limit the political crises that will continue to face the tourism industry.

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## Appreciative Inquiry as a Framework for Rural Tourism Development Research

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### Highlights

- In order to stand out in a global marketplace, destinations need to have a unique tourism offering
- The development of unique tourism offerings tends to focus on what a destination is lacking, rather than existing assets
- Appreciative Inquiry is a tool that can be utilized in tourism development efforts to identify existing assets and engage local stakeholders in the development process
- Appreciate Inquiry is comprised of a four step process that can guide qualitative data collection that can inform tourism development

### Background

To remain attractive in the competitive global marketplace, a destination must feature local, unique resources to enhance their image and remain attractive (Hong, 2009). The successful cultivation of tourism through these resources plays a critical role in the socio-economic and political development of a destination. Beyond increasing access to essential services such as water, sanitation, telecommunications and transportation, tourism development provides employment opportunities and increased standards of living (Gooroochurn & Sugiyarto, 2005). Thus, when developed with appropriate foundations, tourism can improve the welfare of the resident population (Cárdenas-García et al, 2013).

A destination, particularly rural destinations, lacking critical resources for tourism development can experience challenges to establish competitiveness in a global marketplace (Gannon, 1994). The limited resources and infrastructure for developing new experiences, attractions, and services can influence the tourists' visit as the quality of the rural tourism experience depends on the quality of the countryside capital that supports it (Garrod et al, 2006). While many rural areas may have limited tourism infrastructure, such as hotels or airports, they do possess cultural and natural resources that can be leveraged for economic development (Gannon, 1994). However, tourism development efforts tend to emphasize a deficit-based approach, which focuses on missing assets and strategies to overcome, rather than focusing on the maximization of existing resources and positive potential (Whitney & Tristen-Bloom, 2010). Tourism development requires considerable investment and design, thus supporting the need for an innovative and inclusive approach that encompasses current, successful assets and key stakeholders for the benefit of the entire community.

### Objective

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach for using research to identify development opportunities and encourages active local participation through community dialogue regarding strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams by exploring "what gives life to human systems" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom). AI instills community members with a heightened sense of purpose

and recognition, along with active participation in the tourism product development enabling tourism benefits to reach communities (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). “This method has been applied in the context of tourism development in rural communities” (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012) and in efforts to diversify local economies through tourism (Koster & Lemelin, 2009). Due to the limited tourism infrastructure in the westernmost region of North Carolina, we are applying AI to identify opportunities surrounding the abundant agriculture and local food systems found in these rural mountain communities. From this study, we hope to frame the transition from agrarian to diversified and sustainable economies through the integration of local food systems to develop agritourism and food tourism experiences. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how AI can be used as a research method for collecting qualitative data to guide tourism development (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012) drawing upon its application in the context of food tourism development in Western NC.

### Method Overview

AI is a research method focused on strengths in individuals, organizations, communities, and societies (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). This approach is supported through in-depth conversations and rich interviews with key stakeholders to elaborate on current efforts and share success stories of people and organizations. AI creates space for new, innovative ideas by including as many voices as possible to introduce multiple views and recommendations. In doing so AI explores recognition and value, ultimately creating positive change by fostering knowledge-rich, relationally inclusive, and self-organizing enterprises (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) through a method of research with people, not on people (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012).

AI is implemented through the 4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny that functions by identifying positive, existing assets to achieve sustainable success (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The **Discovery** phase encompasses affirmative conversations with stakeholders related to a specific context which generate data for thematic analysis (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). This analysis can identify the positive forces for change such as tourism development (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). The **Dream** phase supports innovative strategic visions to stimulate valuable futures of a destination based on the forces identified in the Discovery phase. This phase encourages participants to think beyond short-term issues (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012) and instead imagine the organization in a larger context by defining and measuring future success. From this, organizational change can be devised through supportive calculated action items encouraging a radical shift in design, energy, and approach (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The **Design** phase takes shape through identification of the values and ideas generated from the Dream phase (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). This phase is designed to move the organization from the current state to the desired future goal through bringing preferences to life (The Appreciative Inquiry Commons, 2017). This Design phase consists of three broad decisions for consideration; *what*, *who*, and *how* (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). This phase of the 4-D Cycle connects the action agenda, affirmative topic(s), interview data, and Dreams to create a broad framework for completion (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The **Destiny** phase is the final and delivery phase of the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle and is broken down into a three-dimensional structure. The first dimension involves recognition of what has been learned to initiate transformational change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The second dimension is the introduction teams to initiate goal-driven, action-oriented changes (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The third dimension contains the strategic

application of Appreciative Inquiry to programs, processes, and systems within the entire destination (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

### Method Application

AI has proven valuable as a data collection method in rural tourism development studies across a variety of contexts (Ainley & Kline, 2014; Koster & Lemelin, 2009; Poudel & Nyaupane, 2012). Its emphasis on community strengths and existing resources has provided researchers with the ability to identify the foundational components of tourism development as well as opportunities for future growth (Poudel & Nyaupane, 2012). Due to its suitability as a research method in this context, we are applying AI in a study of agritourism and food tourism development in North Carolina's rural mountain communities. The aim of the study is to identify opportunities to more fully integrate the local food and tourism systems through the development of regional agritourism and food tourism experiences. The communities included in this study are in the westernmost region of the state and are rich in agricultural traditions and unique foodways, but have limited tourism infrastructure. Presently they do not utilize a regional approach to unify their agritourism and food tourism assets.

AI provides a framework for identifying the existing assets that will serve as a foundation for the development of regional agritourism and food tourism experiences. It can also uncover stakeholders' preferences for the future development of such experiences and the roles they can play in achieving that desired level of development. To gather these insights, we will conduct interviews with 20 - 25 stakeholders across the region using an interview protocol that is guided by AI. We will also integrate an asset mapping activity to help provide a geographic representation of existing agritourism and food tourism assets. Table 1 outlines how the stages of Appreciative Inquiry align with the proposed interview protocol.

Table 1. Interview protocol questions guided by Appreciative Inquiry

	<b>Examples of interview protocol questions</b>
Discovery	What is your greatest asset in terms of attracting visitors?
Dream	Describe your vision for agritourism/food tourism in this region five years from now: 1.) What experiences would be offered?; 2.) Who would be participating in those experiences?; and 3.) How would those experiences connect with some of the other agritourism assets you described previously?
Design	What assets currently exist to help you achieve this five-year vision?
Destiny	How would you define the success of your five-year vision for agritourism/food tourism in this region?

### Recommendations

All destination managers seek to capitalize upon their unique resources and many strive to contribute to regional tourism products. Doing this successfully requires stakeholder support and a thorough understanding of the potential for those resources to coalesce into an attractive tourism experience. We recommend that researchers utilize AI in the data collection process to

generate an inventory of tourism assets and encourage stakeholders to envision a future tourism product that they can contribute to. Doing so will help identify opportunities to create a unique tourism product that allows a destination to stand out in a global marketplace and will provide an opportunity to engage stakeholders in the tourism development process. Designed to involve community members, AI recognizes the knowledge and actual needs of the residents to influence transformations and productivity within the tourism sector. To enhance this productivity and community satisfaction, we suggest adjusting organizational dialogue to reflect strength-oriented and affirmative discussion that concentrates on positive change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2012). According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2012), there is “a menu of approaches” to implement AI in an organization to produce a change agenda suitable for the organization and community. To find an effective AI process for the community at large, we suggest progressive forms of engagement and networking that will forge alliances and partnerships to build bonds among diverse groups of people (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2012). From this merging of stakeholders, a strategically developed change agenda based on the 4-D process can be devised to target the needs of the community as a whole.

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## Tips, Tourism, and Musical Labor on Beale Street

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### Highlights

This research:

- locates communication and economic issues in cultural heritage and entertainment based tourism
- shows both the structural reasons for these issues and the ethnographic / lived experience of these issues
- offers tangible solutions for all cultural heritage and entertainment based tourist areas and activities

In 1966, a two block section of Beale Street, in Memphis, Tennessee, was declared a National Historic District for its legacy as an African American culture and music hub. Today, Beale Street is America's most iconic street, the Official Home of the Blues, and the most visited tourist attraction in the state of Tennessee ("Beale Street," 2019). Tourism generates \$3.65 billion for Memphis annually, and five million visitors travel to Beale Street per year. The majority of tourists visit Beale for live music and Memphis music history ("Memphis Fact Sheet," 2018).

Backed by the data above, Beale Street is lauded as a successful model of urban revitalization and musical tourism (Freeman, 1998). The success of Beale Street is not possible without the musicians who work at the bars and clubs along Beale, preserving, interpreting, and performing the music that tourists come to experience. However, since Beale was revitalized in 1983, few books, articles, or city council meetings have addressed or included the experiences of musicians who work on Beale Street. As a scholar, Beale Street musician, and advocate, I use my ethnographic experience and published data to elucidate the main issues working musicians face on Beale Street. I then offer practical solutions for improving the working conditions of musicians on Beale Street. Finally, I show how this information applies to other cultural heritage and entertainment based tourism sites in the Southeast United States, and beyond. Overall, I provide ways to make tourism more equitable and sustainable for culture bearers. The benefits are improved quality of life for musicians, artisans, and artists working in tourist areas, and improved experiences for tourists.

Beale Street is a public-private partnership in which the city of Memphis owns the majority of the buildings and oversees rent collection, maintenance, and repairs, as well as security, marketing, and events planning. Musicians are largely hired as independent contractors by venues, and they face a daily grind that includes fluctuating parking fees, loading heavy equipment, a lack of security, and navigating the ebb and flow of crowds. For-profit venues have no obligation (and often no means) to provide affordable parking, security, or loading zones for musicians, and musicians simply go without.

The first persistent issue is that there is no line of communication between musicians and the quasi-governmental entertainment district administration, Beale Street Management. Thus,

musicians have no way to communicate ongoing problems, and are left out of redesigns, road closures, parking and loading zone redistribution, and marketing. But without musicians, there would be no Beale Street. In public-private tourism ventures, it is important to maintain lines of communication between those in charge and those who entertain tourists. Without this communication, feelings of disenfranchisement and exploitation grow.

Over the last year, I have served as a liaison between the musicians and Beale Street Management in order to rectify persistent issues. Ensuring that musicians have simple accommodations, like affordable parking, is an investment in the quality of music on Beale, because it shows that those in power are aware of persistent issues and want to protect and preserve the safety and comfort of the musicians. Without appropriate accommodations for and communication with musicians, Beale Street will simply lose its top talent.

The second major issue on Beale Street is that of branding. While Beale Street is framed as a blues destination, city leaders, blues writers, and tourists often lament the lack of “real blues” on Beale. City reports propose the establishment of new blues-only venues on Beale. However, my research shows that many people have different definitions of “real blues,” and that Beale was not historically a blues-only street. Additionally, for blues music to thrive on Beale today, it must be clearly stated as a priority to musicians and sustainably financially supported. What folks miss in analyses of Beale is the way its tips-based economy impacts the availability of “real blues” on the street.

Beale Street is a collation of venues in which tips function as either part or all of the pay for musicians. Musicians are incentivized to perform what tourists pay to hear. Often, tourists tip and request non-blues songs, like the Rolling Stones, Bruno Mars, and Marc Cohn’s famous “Walking in Memphis.” Musicians frame the solicitation of tips as a Beale Street tradition, but others find both the lack of Beale Street blues and the musical begging garish.

To sustain blues, or any form of traditional art or cultural heritage, the musicians on Beale Street must be ensured fair financial compensation for performing blues music. With a tips-based economy, they are ensured financial compensation for what tourists demand, which is not necessarily blues. City leaders who critique Beale must be aware of the ways in which a tips-based economy allows the tipping tourists to determine the music heard on the street, and the ways in which venue owners do or do not maintain their establishments as blues clubs. City leaders, Beale Street Management, and Beale Street’s for-profit venues must be clear on the blues branding of the street, and must be aware that, currently, tourists’ tips control the repertoire performed. Should a new venue for blues open on Beale, my research shows it should function without tips. Fair, consistent, non-tip-based wages paid to a variety of blues musicians who perform different styles of “real blues” will insure that the blues stays on Beale.

Public-private tourism, entertainment districts, and heritage, art, and music-based tourist sites are rife with complex issues. However, with insight into the structural reasons for these issues, as well as the lived experience of those working in tourists areas, one can simultaneously improve both the working conditions and the tourist experience. Overall, to ensure a quality experience for tourists and an ethical job site for musicians on Beale, communication must be improved. Additionally, a full understanding of how musicians are paid, and how pay impacts branding and music, is needed.

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## Smile a While: A Collaboration Between Industry Partners Centered on Tourism

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Research in hospitality and tourism is published at an unprecedented rate (McKercher, 2017). Despite increased academic interest, a clear understanding of the dynamics between industry and academics in hospitality in tourism has not been achieved (Baines, Brennan, Gill, & Mortimore, 2009). State Fairs play a uniquely critical role in tourism (Davis, 2002). This study targeted the intersection of industry tourism through the Arkansas State Fair and academic tourism through Arkansas Tech University. These institutions met with marketing firm Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, CJRW, to explore a practical approach to achieve client success using market research.

Biennially, the Arkansas State Fair collaborates with CJRW to conduct market research to provide up to date demographics. These demographics allow the Arkansas State Fair to accurately define their current audience for advertising purposes. Arkansas Tech University partnered with the Arkansas State Fair and CJRW in 2018 to administer surveys in order to formulate a persuasive strategy for the fair. Students participating were expected to gain real world experience in market research. Twenty-three students enrolled in a cross-listed course, Hospitality Marketing and Sales. The class consisted of Parks, Recreation and Hospitality Administration students. Students were randomly assigned to teams of five to seven. The Arkansas State Fair was able to have visitors surveyed at various times to have a good cross section of patrons. CJRW was then able to take the data and create an advertising plan and execution.

Multiple goals were achieved through this cross-organizational project. Arkansas Tech University students were introduced to the IRB process, as well as the challenges of applied, industry tourism; such as approaching strangers in an unfamiliar setting. The Arkansas State Fair and CJRW were able to identify their target audience, forecast trends, and develop their upcoming strategies. This presentation hopes to reveal a strategy for other partners in the tourism sector to work together to align practical, applied research to building a strategy for a brand and promoting a large-scale event.

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