



Smart City Hospitality

A JPI Urban Europe Project

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Although urban tourism also contributes to (local) economic prosperity, in recent years its negative impacts have grabbed the media headlines, with the discussion now focusing on overtourism, CO₂ emissions and waste, which harm the quality of life for residents and the experience quality for tourists. The Smart City Hospitality project addresses these issues by supporting cities to make the transition towards environmentally and socially responsible tourism. By combining hospitality principles, simulation tools, apps and serious gaming techniques, city tourism in six cities - Amsterdam, Belgrade, Darmstadt, Goteborg, and Stavanger, Valencia - examined. The SCITHOS framework serves as the reference point for context-specific discussions about urban tourism with the Smart City Hospitality Project (Figure 1). Based on extensive literature review and over 50 interviews with stakeholders in the six participating cities, the SCITHOS framework combines current thinking on sustainable development with thinking on city hospitality and resilience. The framework places the discussion of city tourism in a systems perspective to create a more holistic discussion of the role and impacts of tourism in a city.

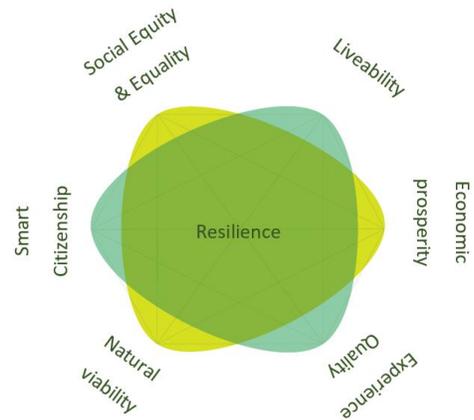


Figure 1: SCITHOS Framework

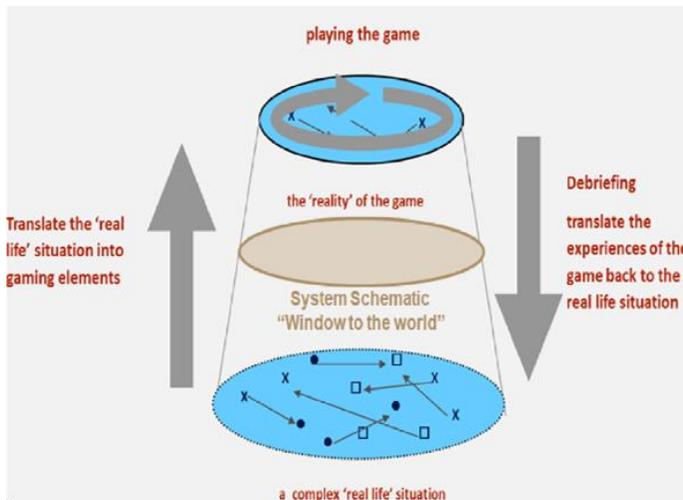


Figure 2: applying a game for real-life understanding: Adapted from (Peters, Vissers, & Heijne, 1998, p 22)

The game is an essential part of the project. Its aim is to assist policymakers and stakeholders in deep reflections on appropriate context-specific intervention strategies for sustainable urban tourism development (Figure 2). By translating the 'real life' situation into gaming elements, a game 'reality' is created that can act as a system schematic 'window to the world' that is somewhat less complex and political. It allows for more free engagement and interaction between stakeholders, who can jointly experiment with different ways of addressing real-life issues, thus contributing to new insights and a greater understanding of other perspectives. Following an extended debriefing

game experiences can be translated back to the real-life situation to provide stakeholders with an option to further reflect on city tourism in their city and ways to make it more sustainable.

The SCITHOS game itself is a combination of an 'analogue' board game and a computer simulation. The analogue game is played by having a group of up to 20 stakeholders stand around around a 'map' of the city. Players can combine the tiles to create their own city using hexagon tiles (e.g. city centre, business district, industrial zone, residential area, waterfront, airport – Figure 3). On these tiles objects can be placed for restaurants, hotels, etcetera. Not all objects can be placed on all tiles though as tiles have a certain carrying capacity.



Figure 3: initial outline of game board (draft artwork)

The stakeholders who are playing the game can choose to 'play' certain policy cards to prevent negative effects of tourism or increase its positive effects. Policies can be both long-term, with an aim to create a more structural change of the system and short-term, to deal with more immediate issues. While policies are mostly targeted at tourism development, they also include more wider infrastructural development options. Players do not know what the outcome of their policy cards will be and a 'wrong' combination of cards may actually result in outcomes opposite to those anticipated. The game is supported by an actor-based modelling simulation, which will help to indicate to cities what the impact of player actions are.

Impacts are measured using the six elements of the SCITHOS framework, not just for the city as a whole, but also for a number of 'personas' who represent different types of residents and visitors. It may be that, for example, players actions will increase the liveability for a certain type of persona at the expense of another one, or that greater liveability means that overall economic prosperity declines. Feeding back this information to participants is used to start a discussion that should help stakeholders reflect on complex issues such as for whom is the city? How to ensure a long-term liveable city that is interesting to visit? How to deal with different perspectives of residents and ensure smart citizenship? How to ensure that city tourism's contribution to climate change remains within limits?

The discussions and reflections should help stakeholders to appreciate the true complexity of sustainable tourism development. The aim is not for all stakeholders to agree to new policy measures, but rather to help them to understand and respect other peoples's perspectives. As such, stakeholders are stimulated to engage with other stakeholders they may have not talked with before, but also learn from others. By stimulating people to better appreciate other people's perspectives on city tourism and the reasons behind these views, they may be more open for continuing the debate after the gaming session and reflect more deeply on the complexity and underlying issues of city tourism as part of wider city development. In future this then can stimulate more collaborative forms of decision-making, even for a subject like city tourism development, which has in recent years been characterised by its divisiveness.

Further information: www.scithos.eu or koens.k@buas.nl