



**2020 Academic Symposium of the Japanese Society for  
Geographical Sciences**

**Tourism Transformations: Resilient Islands and  
Revitalized Communities**

**Symposium Abstracts**

**Date: November 28, 2020 (Sat) 11:50-17:30 (JST)  
Venue: Hiroshima University Central Library Hall  
(1-2-2 Kagamiyama, Higashihiroshima City)**

**The Japanese Society for Geographical Sciences**

## ❖Schedule of the Program❖

**Introduction** 11:50-12:00 Dr. Carolin Funck (Hiroshima University, Japan)

### **Paper presentations- First session**

12:00-12:30 Dr. David N. Nguyen (Tohoku University, Japan) Dr. Miguel Esteban (Waseda University, Japan) Dr. Onuki Motoharu (University of Tokyo, Japan): Ogasawara Islands: Sustainability versus Resiliency

12:30-13:00 Dr. Chin-Cheng Ni (National Tsinghua University, Taiwan): Impact and Resilience of Island Tourism under COVID19 —Lesson Learned from Taiwan Island

13:00-13:30 Dr. Shenglin Chang (National Taiwan University, Taiwan): Could Blockchain technology transform the Lanyu Island tourist industry into resilience for the Tao culture and society?

13:30-14:00 Dr. Rie Usui (Hiroshima University, Japan): Island tourism resilience in the case of wildlife tourism destinations

**Comment for the first session** 14:00-14:10 Dr. Alan A. Lew (Northern Arizona University, USA)

**Break** 14:10-14:30

### **Paper presentations- Second session**

14:30-15:00 Andrew McCormick (Hiroshima University, Japan) and Meng Qu (Hiroshima University, Japan): Community resourcefulness under pandemic pressure: Japan's island tourism entrepreneurs

15:00-15:30 Yao Ji (Keio University, Japan): Community resiliency in times of crisis: The case of Kamijima

15:30-16:00 Dr. Macia Blazquez Salom (University of the Balearic Islands, Spain): How resilient are insular mono-functional tourism territories? Analysis of the Balearic Islands, Spain

16:00-16:30 Dr. Stroma Cole (University of the West of England, Great Britain): Island Tourism and Covid-19: A gender perspective.

**Comment for the second session** 16:30-16:40 Dr. Joseph M. Cheer (Wakayama University, Japan)

**Final discussion** 16:40-17:20 (40 mins)

**Closing remark** 17:20-17:30 Dr. Carolin Funck (Hiroshima University)

## **Ogasawara Islands: Sustainability versus Resiliency**

**Dr. David N. Nguyen (Tohoku University, Japan)**

**Dr. Miguel Esteban (Waseda University, Japan)**

**Dr. Onuki Motoharu (University of Tokyo, Japan)**

The Ogasawara Islands, located roughly halfway between Tokyo, Japan and the US Mariana islands, is renowned for its unique ecosystem, earning it the nickname the ‘Galapagos of the East’. Despite its isolation, the island is home to a population of nearly 2,000 inhabitants, comprising of a mixture of the descendants of European-American and Hawaiian settlers and later migration from the Japanese mainland.

Due to geographic limitations, much of the population resides on the coast of Chichijima, the largest of the Ogasawara Islands. This area has been affected by various hazards, such as typhoons, flooding and tsunami damage. Its isolation from the Japanese mainland and other major population centers, leads to greater vulnerability during a disaster. The island is currently considering the construction of an airport, which on the one hand could strengthen the tourism economy and improve disaster resiliency, but on the other hand, negatively impact the island’s unique ecosystem.

This research examines how key stakeholders in Ogasawara’s Chichijima Island view local hazard vulnerabilities, based on past experiences with natural hazards, expectations for the future, and perceptions of local response capabilities and what could strengthen future resiliency on the island.

## **Impact and Resilience of Island Tourism under COVID19 — Lesson Learned from Taiwan Island**

**Dr. Chin-Cheng Ni (National Tsinghua University, Taiwan)**

COVID 19 is a definite overwhelming issue all over the world in 2020. Under the prevalent trend, Taiwan island keeps relative lower confirmed infection and few death cases, because it occurs as the isolation of island transferring into island protection. The first peak stage presented during Feb. to May, and first valley stage appears during June to present according the statistics of COVID 19. At first peak stage, the impacts of destroyed tourism industry, deprived demands of potential visitors, and reduced interference in environment were included by frontier closed to inbound tourists and domestic attractions restricted from governmental polices. When first valley stage comes, Taiwan is resilient from COVID-19 epidemic by good accumulation of social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital. Asian Development Bank (ADB) was cutting its forecast for GDP growth to 0.8 percent, but Taiwan is expected to perform best than Four Asian Tigers and neighboring countries in 2020. This study adopted resilient factors on Human Development Index (HDI) and ‘Sense of Worries’ of residents for tourism understanding. The results found the processes for resilience consists of four stakeholders (public sectors, private sectors, visitors/potential visitors, and destinations/local communities) with mixed top-down path and mixed supply-demand path. Public sectors issued governmental policies (e.g. stimulus voucher program, travel subsidy, big data for visitor flow alarm, and new life movement) involving stable role playing and initiated tourism recovery. Private sectors suffered from biggest financial loss among four stakeholders; fortunately, the previous outbound capital/fund flow turned into domestic capital/fund flow during this period. Tourism entrepreneurs or investors used the strategies including sale promotion, transformation on travel agency, application from on-the-job training, and creative offerings to stimulate visitors’ demands, etc... involving adaptive and transformative roles’ playing. The last practice presented above could be a proof of the supply-demand path with potential visitors. Visitors/potential visitors responded to the COVID 19 with engaging special types in “Revenge tours” and “Pretend to Go Abroad tours”, as well as they developed the transformative tourists gaze on attractions. They are involving the adaptive role playing for resilience. The passive stakeholder of destinations/local communities received impacts and representation involving adaptive and transformative roles’ playing for resilience, including explosive social visits, rapid accumulated income, intensive natural impacts, and cultural representation by local people and mass media. In conclusion, Taiwan had performed better resilience under the COVID 19 in 2020.

## **Could Blockchain technology transform the Lanyu Island tourist industry into resilience for the Tao culture and society?**

**Dr. Shenglin Chang (National Taiwan University, Taiwan)**

The prosperous tourism developments in Lanyu Taiwan have challenged the capacity of the island ecosystem. While islanders' livelihoods on the small islands heavily rely on tourism industries, overloaded vacation visitors heavily exploit the sensitive environments and leave unrecycled garbage. In 2018, a high-tech company committed to held an experiment by establishing the so-called "Tao Coin" based on blockchain technology. The experiment was held in the Lanyu Island home of the Tao Tribe that allows tourists to support islanders' local shops with the utilizations of Tao Coins. The Tao-Coin ecotourism project temps to establish collaborations between tourists and islanders by building up the local currency system. One year later, the Tao-Coin tourism project failed due to the lack of local supports from the Tao business, even though the characteristics of sharing, supporting, and collaborating are the root of the Tao culture.

Based on participatory observations and in-depth interviews, we study the rise and fall of the Tao-Coin ecotourism experiment in Lanyu Island. Lanyu locates in the southeastern ocean away from Taiwan, with about five thousand aboriginal population. Residing in Lanyu Island, the Tao tribe is known for their participatory culture and democratic practices. They share fishes and taros with relatives and communities while collaborating to build the fishing boats. We compare the Tao Coin Case and traditional Tao "Sharing" culture. We consist of this paper with four sections. We first introduce the background of Lanyu Island and the Tao tribe's cultural landscape. Secondly, we elaborate on the tourism crisis of Lanyu Island. Tourists and their garbages have burdened the ecological system of Lanyu Island. Thirdly, we explain the Tao Coin experiment initiated by a blockchain-based IT company. The goal of the Tao Coin originally was to call for tourists' environmental awareness. Finally, we analyze how the Tao Coin experiment failed through Tao's sharing culture system's perspectives, including boat-building teams, fishing groups, and the egalitarian distribution of fish.

## **Island tourism resilience in the case of wildlife tourism destinations**

**Dr. Rie Usui (Hiroshima University, Japan)**

Resilience theory has increasingly been adapted to the literature associated with nature-based tourism, including wildlife tourism. Majority of the existing research has discussed community and business adaptations in the context of environmental change. Moreover, research on wildlife tourism incorporating the resilience approach has focused on marine mammals and birds. To date, wildlife tourism studies discussing the resilience of terrestrial species tourism are limited. Therefore, the present study draws on a case of free-ranging rabbits inhabiting Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. In particular, the study discusses how an alien species that became a popular tourism attraction and challenged the existing and widely accepted conservation-based wildlife tourism management by incorporating resilience thinking in the context of social change.

Ōkunoshima Island has transformed drastically over the last 70 years. During World War II, it was a military base for producing poisonous gases. In 1960, the island was designated as the National Vacation Village to promote tourism; for decades, it was a recreational and educational site for visitors to learn about the island's war-time history. A major shift in the island's tourism industry occurred in 2015, when its exposure to social media resulted in a growing number of domestic and international tourists. Since then, the island's rabbits have become its primary tourism resource and attraction, attracting not only the largest number of tourists ever but also a fair share of challenges. In addition to the internationalization of tourist profiles, the types of tourists that visit the island has been altered. The growing popularity of rabbit tourism has overcrowded the island. Furthermore, tourists want to feed the rabbits, resulting in the rabbits' dependence on human food handouts and overpopulation. Problems associated with the proliferation of rabbits require the destination management to intervene. However, the rabbits' status as an alien species has complicated the decision-making process. Thus, in favor of being adaptive of social change, this study argues that the destination management policy needs to look beyond the conventional conservation approach.

## **Community resourcefulness under pandemic pressure: Japan's island tourism entrepreneurs**

**Andrew McCormick (Hiroshima University, Japan) & Meng Qu (Hiroshima University,  
Japan)**

For Japan's small island communities, already facing an existential demographic crisis due to their aging, shrinking populations, the coronavirus pandemic has proven to be a critical stress test. In particular, on islands with nascent tourism economies that have replaced declining primary and secondary industries, the situation has threatened to reverse precious economic and demographic gains that marginal communities can scarcely afford to lose. This study re-examines two islands that had demonstrated successful small tourism business development in earlier research prior to the pandemic—success that was tied to community resourcefulness, where a localized synergy of agency and capacity spurred entrepreneurial success. New field observations and interviews revealed entrepreneurs caught between competing priorities: preserving community health, and preserving their own livelihoods. This tension between priorities at times led to conflict, which was exacerbated in some instances by further divisions between the tourism sector and other community stakeholders, as well as between in-migrant business owners and other long-term residents. However, a strong sense of community responsibility was observed among tourism-business entrepreneurs in both communities, a number of which pivoted toward community-facing services, and receiving newfound community support in turn. This study clarifies the role of community resourcefulness in fostering tourism business resiliency in peripheral communities, a topic of particular significance in times of profound disruption.

## **Community resiliency in times of crisis: The case of Kamijima**

**Yao Ji (Keio University, Japan)**

Though the population of Japan's remote and rural regions are rapidly declining, several islands in the Seto Inland sea in South Japan have gained attention recently for their success in attracting visitors and migrants. This paper introduces the case of Kamijima, Ehime Prefecture, comprising of a small collection of islands near the popular Nishiseto Expressway, a popular cycling track also known as Shimanami Kaido. In addition to a growing tourism industry Kamijima's revitalization stems from the community itself through various initiatives by its residents and more recently migrants who play a vital role in the island's resilience and revitalization. The purpose of the study is to understand current revitalization strategies through the lived experience and perspectives of those that live and work on the islands including the current situation with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is based on an ethnographic approach comprising of a hybrid of physical and online fieldwork through in-depth interviews with small business owners many of whom are migrants from outside the islands and those who are originally from Kamijima who have returned after time away. The results shed light into how these individuals were affected and responded to the pandemic and their personal views on the island's future development. It is found that the current pandemic situation has not affected the island significantly but conflicting views and expectations between long term residents and newcomers have put pressure on businesses predominantly operated by migrants as their businesses attract tourists and visitors from outside the island who are seen as a risk to the island's vulnerable elderly population.

## **How resilient are insular mono-functional tourism territories? Analysis of the Balearic Islands, Spain**

**Dr. Macia Blazquez Salom (University of the Balearic Islands, Spain)**

In the Balearic Islands, the economic recovery from the 2008 systemic crisis was characterized by a return to the typical formula of tourism and real estate growth. This was achieved through the legalization of illegally built housing estates, the restructuring of sun and sand tourist resorts, the promotion of housing rentals to tourists, the modernization of hotel accommodation, and the authorized occupation of public spaces for tourism purposes. This process went hand in hand with new urban planning and tourism regulations, aimed at legalizing and fostering it on the pretext of reactivating the economy, and creating business opportunities and jobs.

In a former article, we identified the challenges and contradictions implicit in this scenario of tourism congestion (Blázquez, et al., 2019):

- \* Even greater commodification of tourism by converting housing into tourism rentals and promoting private use of beaches, harbours, and public and natural spaces.
- \* Tourism gentrification by opting for wealthy tourist segments, with a quantitative drop in the number of tourists but rising consumption and squandered resources (e.g. of water and energy).
- \* Socio-spatial segregation through dispossession and exclusion from public spaces (such as the beaches of sun and sand resorts) or natural spaces by monopolizing them for élite housing.
- \* The creation of lobbies of interest groups, made up of landowners, local business employers and élites, aimed at monopolizing rents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sudden change, moving from a scenario of tourism congestion to a new reality that points to new trends:

- \* Investment into hotel properties as a safe haven for capital due to their locational earning capacity and their potential for new uses (residential, administrative, commercial etc.), thanks to amendments to the regulatory framework.
- \* The monopolization of real estate in rural and natural spaces, given their greater safety in health terms.
- \* The increased earning capacity of luxury tourism establishments, also identified by rising private air traffic during the pandemic.

This is how the Balearic Islands—an archipelago with a strong dependence on tourism—is facing up to the COVID-19 crisis. Nonetheless, this reformulation of the touristification process is not exempt from serious social and environmental tensions.

## **Island Tourism and Covid-19: A gender perspective**

**Dr. Stroma Cole (University of the West of England, Great Britain)**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential gendered impact of Covid -19 on island tourism SMEs, so we can learn from the current crisis and be better prepared for the next. Through a brief exploration of three bodies of literature: SMEs and resilience; gender and resilience; and Covid 19, tourism and gender; and using illustrations from Indonesian island destinations, I will identify some gaps in knowledge and actions, and make some suggestions for further research. A gendered understanding of the impact of Covid-19 is based on the understanding there is an unequal distribution of vulnerabilities and that these vulnerabilities cut across lines of gender, race, class, and so on. While more men have died than women, we need to understand the impacts on survivors and their businesses. The impacts are not only economic but embodied phenomena that have physical, psychological, and social effects on the individuals and communities that face a changing or unstable future. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the problems of the global growth model for tourism and the resulting issues of overdependency on tourism, particularly in island destinations. It has also laid bare structural inequalities in particular gender, race and age within and between societies. Many have argued for a critical reconsideration of tourism and there is a lot of talk about how to “bounce back better”. I suggest the economic recovery needs to start by understanding present vulnerabilities so we are better able to ensure tourism is Built Forward Better, i.e. not going back to the present models but incorporating considerable shifts. Putting Gender Equality at the centre of the Build Forward Better post Covid-19 recovery framework, could improve alignment of tourism with all the Sustainable Development Goals and lead to a greener, more inclusive and resilient industry.

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