Slide 1

A tourism community at times of critical transition in its socio-cultural, political, and economic lives: The case of Petra, Jordan
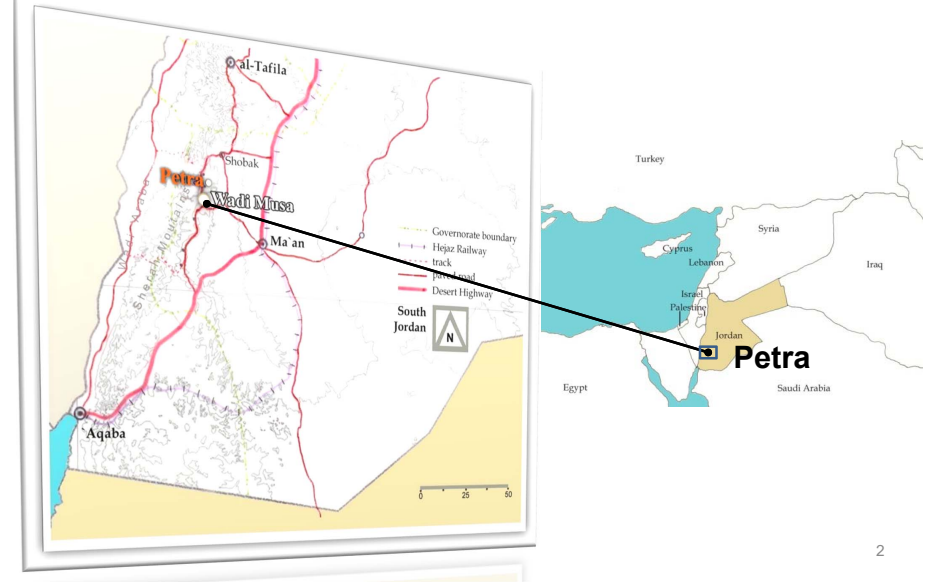

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Slide 2

Area of Detail

Petra

Slide 3
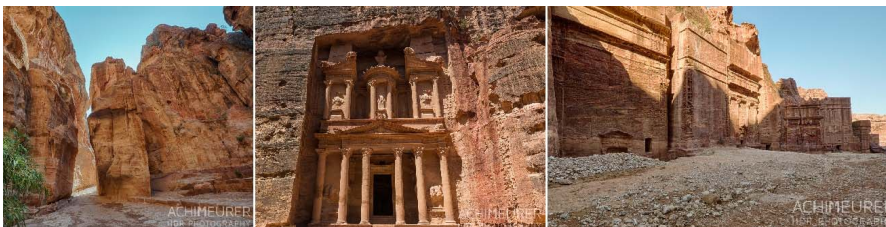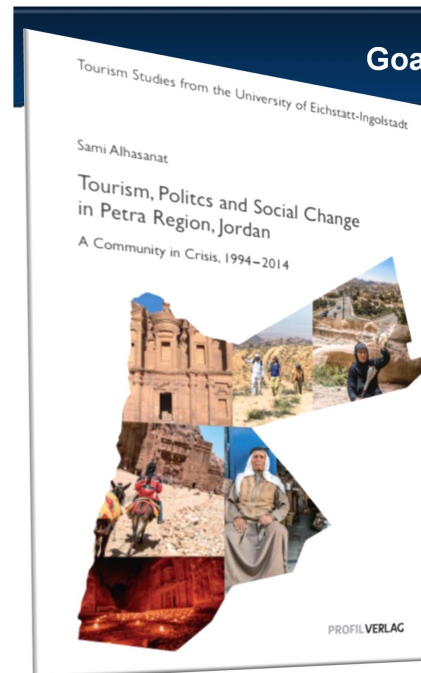
Petra: One of the most dramatic sites in the world

- Located in the south of Jordan, Petra is a major historical site with antiquities dating back to 7500 B.C.

- Petra was a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985 and voted in 2007 one of the "New Seven Wonders of the World".

Petra Views. Source: Achim Meurer HDR Photography

Slide 4

Goal of the work presented here is:

Tourism Studies from the University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Sami Alhasanat

Tourism, Politcs and Social Change in Petra Region, Jordan

A Community in Crisis, 1994–2014

PROFIL **VERLAG**

To capture a community at a time of critical transition in its political, economic and socio-cultural lives – all of which are entangled almost inextricably with tourism.

Statement

Petra has experienced an economic success and an exponential rate of transformation since 2007 as a direct result of its selection as one of the "New Seven Wonders of the World" (N7W). However, Its increased value as a tourism destination has created socio-cultural tensions and ambiguities in the life of the community.

Methodology

I use a combination of quantitative measures and qualitative description to construct a Geertzian "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the study community.

❑ **Archival sources:** Studies, reports, books, articles and government files.

❑ **Ethnographic sources:** Participant observation, broad-sweep surveys (700 surveys) and interviews of a cross-section of the Petra community (22 topical in-depth).

Local people's perceptions about tourism in Petra
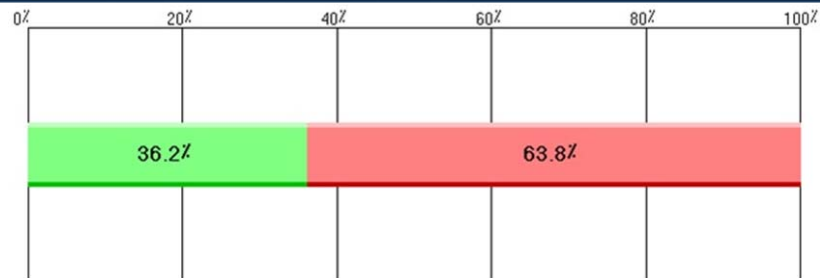
Evaluation List: n = 606   ■ Positive   ■ Negative

On the positive side:
- Increased income.
- New opportunities for better education.
- Understand other cultures.
- Develop services and infrastructure.
- Source of pride of identity.

On the negative side:
- People feel "like strangers in their own town".
- Tourists take priority over residents.
- Uncertain income, political injustice, pollution, congestion, water scarcity and social inequalities within the community.
- Child labor, school leavers at an early age.

Results

- The rapid transformation in the form of the local government, local economy, development, and planning are driven by increasing tourism.

- Perception that foreign investment is being courted while local investment, development and job creation are ignored.

- The benefits of tourism are insecure due to the influence of regional events.

- The obsessive and anxious concern over decisions regarding land use.

- Envy of families in the tourism business.

- Resentment of tourism: increased tourism without reaping the benefits.

- Perception that tourists are given priority over local residents.

Potential strategies for the reintegration of the community

➢ **Education on how to benefit local community from tourism revenue.**

➢ **Local government must be responsible for raising awareness about the issues that are disturbing the whole region especially negative socio-cultural impacts.**

➢ **Engagement of representatives of the local community in decision-making processes concerning their region.**

Conclusions

• **The sense that tourism is responsible for some problems in Petra was driven by people's misperception concerning the direct, indirect and induced benefits of tourism.**

• **The traditions and customs – culture, in short – is built on a shared system of values and ethics which in Petra are perceived to be disrupted.**

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Thank you