

**Journal of Tourism
Challenges and Trends**

**Volume VI, No.2
December 2013**

**NEW TRENDS IN
THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF TOURISM**

Editor-in-chief: Prof. dr. Mihaela Sofia Dinu (Romanian-American University, Romania)
Address: office@JournalTCT.ro; www.JournalTCT.ro
ISSN: 1844-9742

CONTENTS

- 5 Foreword
Mihaela Sofia DINU
- 7 From the Guest-Editor
Tamás RÉGI
- 13 (Un)Doing Tourism Anthropology: Outline of a Field of Practice
Les ROBERTS, Hazel ANDREWS
- 39 Revisiting Hosts and Guests: Ethnographic Insights on Touristic Encounters from Cuba
Valerio SIMONI
- 63 *Apologia Pro Turismo*: Breaking Inter- and Intra-Disciplinary Boundaries in the Anthropological Study of Tourism and Pilgrimage
Michael A. DI GIOVINE
- 95 The Self in the World and the World in the Self: the SOAS MA in Anthropology of Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage
Tom SELWYN

FOREWORD

The explosive dynamic of tourism highlights the requirements of the interdisciplinary study between tourism and economics, sociology and environment sciences. A relatively late newcomer to this is the relationship between anthropology and tourism. Both disciplines are fundamentally concerned with humans and it was perhaps inevitable that the two fields of study would converge. Fortunately, the time when anthropologists were distancing themselves from tourist specialists are long since gone. It is of paramount importance that anthropologists and researchers of tourism are now aware of the synergy of their work. And among the "prime" topics of their work are the effects of tourism on the "host", on the local community receiving tourist inflows. In other words, the transformations of the host communities while being subject to the incoming tourism are the "research stock" of anthropologists. This is even more so if one considers that for the "hosts" it is irrelevant whether the "in-comers" are simply tourists or informed anthropologists.

Tourism researchers are also aware how close they are coming to anthropology, at least when analyzing the cultural and social influence of tourism on the visited communities. The "narrow-dimensional" research of the economic and ecological aftermath of tourism tends to become more and more obsolete. And this trend does not exclusively affect small indigenous communities or small scale societies located in exotic faraway locations.

We could note the effects of tourism on the rise on the Lapland communities in Finland or on the native tribes in South-West of USA. Beyond the interests the tourists exhibit for local culture, most rural areas are incapable of carrying short-term high density populations without undergoing dramatic alteration. And with time, the effects are compounded. "In North America, Indian communities are top tourist attractions. Every year, hundreds of thousands of tourists visit Indian locales to watch tribal dances, participate in pow-wows, buy 'genuine' Indian pots, arrowheads, blankets, and beaded belts or hand-fashioned jewelry. They have their photographs taken near totem poles, wooden Indians, or tepees (built and functioning only for this purpose)." We would recommend the article written by Smith Estelli M. in Cultural Survival Q Issue: 6.3 (Fall 1982) "The Tourist Trap: Who's Getting Caught?"

It is only natural to consider how tourism transforms the societies and their culture. And how better to identify the answer without deep forays into anthropology ? It is a complex set of challenges. Notwithstanding this, it still should be tackled.

And as the chief-editor of this journal I only can express my thanks for the competent introduction into the topic by dr. Tamas Regi and for the highly informative and in-depth analyses of this issue's contributors.

Editor in Chief,
Prof. Mihaela Sofia Dinu, PhD

FROM THE GUEST-EDITOR

New Trends in the Anthropology of Tourism

Paul Rabinow and George Marcus (2008) recently argued that the history of anthropology has only included the time up to the writing culture debate of the 1980s. They suggest that from this time onward, it became very difficult to find ready labels or grand organizing debates in anthropological theory. By the 1990s, clear disciplinary lines and trends had blurred, and the grand shifts that defined anthropology largely disappeared from the field. In the last two decades, many central intellectual reforms put forth by the Writing Culture movement have become solidified. For instance, the concepts of 'uncertainty' and 'ambivalence' have now become a standard feature in anthropological research (Eriksen and Nielsen 2013). Additionally, the idea of culture as a static entity capable of objective study was dispelled, with grand narratives of 'culture' and 'society' giving way to the midrange theories of self, identity and representations of personhood. Rabinow and Marcus (2008) described these changes as a shift away from epistemology toward an ontologically-driven anthropology – a process wherein the unified concept of culture was replaced by the idea of identity and self. Many classical anthropological views, for instance, that small-scale societies could be examined as representations of distinct cultures, were now viewed as politically marginal entities and quickly urbanised refugees. The previously-held concepts of ritual, kinship and key symbols, more often than not, were no longer considered functional concepts for anthropological inquiry. 'Slow' societies turned into 'fast' societies, and anthropologists started to bridge emerging technologies with the ontology of selfhood. This endeavour, the connection between the micro-level of everyday life and the macro-level of transnational connections, remains one of the core theoretical focuses of contemporary socio-cultural anthropology.

Tourism anthropology emerged from this paradigm shift of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and so it seems that the history of our discipline began when the unified intellectual history of anthropology ended. The first generation of anthropologists in this early phase of the discipline were heavily influenced by each other, and continued to be influenced by earlier anthropological and other social scientific theories. Nelson Graburn by Edmund Leach, Emile Durkheim; Dennison Nash by Georg Simmel and Alfred Schütz, Tom Selwyn by Thorstein Veblen and A. M. Hocart, just to name a few. As many recent publications (Graburn and Leite 2009, Nash 2007) suggest, tourism anthropology has never been a field of study with well-defined epistemological borders that would keep researchers focused through common methodologies. The classical definition of the discipline, that it should frame the way we produce knowledge, limits its application for the field of the anthropology of tourism.

Tourism anthropology has followed plural and often overlapping theoretical paths in the past decades, and researchers have gradually realized that tourism is not an unconnected social phenomenon, but an integral part of daily life for many people. Dichotomous categories such as host/guest; local/traveller, and home/away often

provide an insufficient framework for understanding personal experiences. Researchers have since realized that it is irrelevant to ask where tourism starts and where it ends, as many people engage in different types (virtual, bodily, imaginative, etc.) of tourism almost every day. And while it is clear that anthropologists were among the first academics to study tourism, the topic is also one of interest to scholars in fields as diverse as sociology, geography, philosophy, and history, among others. With this degree of interdisciplinary attention, one might rightly ask the following questions: What distinguishes the anthropology of tourism from other tourism-related disciplines? What exactly *is* tourism anthropology? What is it that tourism anthropologists actually *do*? This special issue of *The Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends* is a collection papers that attempt to address these important questions.

Over the past decades, a large amount of knowledge has been accumulated regarding tourism by both anthropologists and other social scientists. Despite the significant growth in data collection regarding contemporary travel practices, we still have little information on how this knowledge was actually *produced*. For instance, where exactly did the researchers stand when they collected their information? How close were they to the actors in the field, and how long were their observed touristic encounters? These crucial questions often remain unanswered.

This predicament of doing tourism anthropology is explored by the first article in the issue. In their deep investigation of tourism, Les Robert and Hazel Andrews adopt an existential point of view of the subject by suggesting that instead of fixing the taxonomic, disciplinary and epistemological boundaries of tourism anthropology for the future development of the field, we should instead focus on consolidating, re-evaluating, and re-situating anthropological perspectives on 'doing' tourism and tourism anthropology as it now exists. By exploring the preexisting theoretical terrains, and charting and locating our own place within this terrain through discursive practices of wayfinding and (re)orientation, Roberts and Andrews suggest that anthropologists might wish to routinely follow this process of doing (or undoing) tourism anthropology in order to better locate ourselves within a cross-disciplinary field of practice. The two authors consider the ways in which travel mobilities overlap and dissolve into the landscapes and everyday practices that anthropology has long set out to explore. This helps us to draw a clearer picture of what it is that distinguishes the anthropology of tourism from fields such as cultural geography, business or marketing studies.

Stages of tourist performances have no fixed boundaries and only exist in constantly evolving networks with a large number of actors. This relational time-space concept challenges many classical concepts of tourism and travel. The second essay of our collection explores the application of one of these founding models of tourism anthropology: the host-guest dichotomy. Valerio Simoni argues that our approach to the host-guest or tourist-local binary has tended towards polarizing assessments and generalizations that limit our insights on touristic encounters. On the one hand, such encounters often seem to be fraught by striking inequalities and to be a source of misunderstanding and reciprocal exploitation. On the other, touristic encounters are often portrayed as holding the promise of mutual understanding, and as representing the basis of positive connections between people from around the world. Simoni suggests that instead of striving to

characterize, unambiguously, what is at stake in touristic encounters, we should pay more attention to the competing aspirations and moral demands that inform the way in which different actors make their judgments and decisions. By employing this lens, we can develop a more refined approach to situations where the various subjects/actors involved might interpret the same relationship in multiple ways. One person's act of love, for instance, might thus be read by others as a cunning manipulation, and become truthful or deceptive depending on the allegiances at stake, which is our task to uncover.

This hyper-meaningfulness of the traveller's practice is also the central question for the third article of this special issue. Michael Di Giovine's article reassesses the intra- and inter-disciplinary boundaries in the anthropological study of tourism and pilgrimage. Di Giovine argues that, even after decades of research, many of the most persistent impediments of tourism anthropology – sharing data and positing a unified theory – still remain with us. He uses the example of pilgrimage, which he regards as a subcategory of tourism, to illustrate how different understandings of a particular touristic form can vary among the students of tourism. This varied understanding, he suggests, can be resolved by applying a perspectival gaze that elides the pervasive binaries of pilgrimage-tourism or religious-secular oppositions by ensuring that anyone can be a tourist/pilgrim for a time. This is similar to Valerio Simoni's suggestion, in his article about Cuban tourism, that what matters most is how different forms of tourism are perceived by the actors involved, rather than by the practitioner or researcher. Pilgrimage is a hyper-meaningful voyage, sacred to a pilgrim from either a secular or a religious point of view — despite the meaningfulness and transformative nature of all touristic experiences as a whole.

Understanding tourism through an anthropological lens is necessarily embedded into an educational environment, an institutional backdrop that influences future researchers, their theories and practice. In the closing piece of our collection, which frames the selected articles, Tom Selwyn outlines the broad theoretical foundation for one of the most important educational programs in tourism anthropology in the world, the Anthropology of Tourism, Travel and Pilgrimage MA program at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Through the discussion of his personal journeys, intellectual and physical travels, Selwyn summarises a period when the field of tourism anthropology emerged in his life and the way he contributed to the institutionalisation of the discipline in different countries. Making science and doing anthropology first and foremost is an intellectual voyage, a journey where we are always influenced by others, making several soul mates, professional relationships and friendships along the way. Selwyn's personal narrative outlines a science history and explains how his learning of the topic resulted finally in the theoretical formulation of the SOAS MA program.

We are aware that these four long and rich essays about the development of anthropological theories on tourism and travel rather open up new ways of thinking than give definitive answers for questions. Tourism is still one of the most diverse social fields wherein routine social practices seem extremely different in their nature. It is often almost impossible to find commonalities in radically different forms of tourism. People travel for a plethora of different reasons, feel different emotional connections, move their bodies in different ways, and often search for absolutely dissimilar experiences. The nature of tourist encounters, the way they emerge, their

duration, and their impact are all so different that, in my view, they require a little more patience before any theoretical generalization. We just hope that our selection of papers provide some new ground for this rich field and open up some new ways of thinking about the practices of tourism, travel and the mobile world.

Tamás Régi
Guest-editor
December 2013

References:

- ERIKSEN, H.T. and NIELSEN, F.S. (2013). *A History of Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press.
- LEITE, N. and GRABURN, N. (2009). Anthropological Interventions in Tourism Studies. In: *The Sage Handbook of Tourism Studies*, Robinson, M. and Tazim J. (eds.) London: Sage, 35-64.
- NASH, D. (ed.) (2007). *The Study of Tourism. Anthropological and Sociological Beginnings*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- RABINOW, P., MARCUS, G., FAUBION, J. and REES, T. (2008). *Designs for the Anthropology of Contemporary*. Durham-London: Duke University Press.

(UN)DOING TOURISM ANTHROPOLOGY: OUTLINE OF A FIELD OF PRACTICE

Les ROBERTS*, Hazel ANDREWS**

Abstract: *The idea of 'doing' tourism anthropology is one that prompts reflection on a number of issues, not least those that invite us to consider the merits of its negation: of 'undoing' some of the shibboleths that have attached themselves to the subject area. Accordingly, in this paper we argue that there is a need to delineate more clearly a sense of intellectual lineage and methodological specificity, and to bring into sharper relief what it is that distinguishes/aligns the anthropology of tourism from/with perspectives developed in fields of cultural geography, for example, or business and marketing studies, disciplines that have all sought to claim purchase on ethnographic approaches to the study of tourism. (Un)doing tourism anthropology also entails a process of 'undoing' the tourist: of paying greater recognition to the ways in which tourism mobilities converge, overlap, or rub up against the landscapes, spaces and everyday practices that anthropology more broadly has long set out to explore. Drawing on a lineage which, theoretically and ethnographically, encompasses developments in experiential and phenomenological anthropology, we argue that doing or undoing tourism anthropology is in part the practice of reinforcing the anthropos while at the same time looking critically askance at the category of 'the tourist'.*

Keywords: *performance; experience; embodiment; psychogeography; spatiality.*

* Department of Communication & Media, School of the Arts, University of Liverpool, 19 Abercromby Square, Liverpool L69 7ZG, UK, les.roberts@liverpool.ac.uk

** Faculty of Education, Health and Community, School of Education, Leisure and Sport, Liverpool John Moores University, IM Marsh, Barkhill Road, Aigburth, Liverpool L17 6BD, UK, H.J.Andrews@ljmu.ac.uk.

REVISITING HOSTS AND GUESTS: ETHNOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS ON TOURISTIC ENCOUNTERS FROM CUBA

Valerio SIMONI^{3*}

Abstract: *Scholars and commentators trying to assess the nature of touristic encounters have often reached contrasting conclusions. While on the one hand, such encounters appear to be fraught by striking inequalities, highly deceptive, and a constant source of misunderstanding and reciprocal exploitation, on the other hand, they seem to hold the promise of reciprocal exchange and positive intercultural connections. How do these opposing evaluations take shape, and what informs them? Building on a selective review of anthropological literature on touristic encounters and ethnography of relationships between 'tourists' and 'locals' in Cuba, the article unpacks the moral underpinnings and interpretive frameworks on which these polarizing views are grounded. In touristic encounters in Cuba, contrasts and oppositions between sentiment and interest lead the different actors involved to blur and redraw boundaries between the intrinsic and the instrumental value of relationships. In explaining these different assessments of encounters the article draws attention to the competing agendas, aspirations, and moral demands that inform the way judgments are made, and provides analytical pathways to illuminate the uneasy coexistence of different interpretative frameworks in tourism.*

Keywords: *touristic encounters; ethnography; interpretation; morality; Cuba.*

* Centre for Research in Anthropology, Lisbon University Institute, Avenida Forças Armadas, 1649-026, Lisbon, Portugal, Email: vals_sim@yahoo.com.

APOLOGIA PRO TURISMO: BREAKING INTER- AND INTRA-DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF TOURISM AND PILGRIMAGE

Michael A. DI GIOVINE*

Abstract: *Nearly forty years have passed since anthropologists began linking tourism and pilgrimage, yet there still exist inter-and intra-disciplinary boundaries impeding a robust exchange of data and theory between them. Likewise, the literature by practitioners in these fields reveals an astonishing ambivalence towards the oft-critical and theoretical contributions of anthropologists. Building on the work of Bourdieu, the author asserts that such divides are contingent on historical and cultural forces within and between various groups of stakeholders that are brought together in a “field of touristic production.” Informed by divergent ideologies and research interests, tourism and pilgrimage scholars have taken different pathways towards developing their respective fields, leading to a pervasive dualism that often privileges pilgrimage and neglects tourism. Drawing on a wide breadth of scholarship from numerous disciplines to illuminate definitional, conceptual, and methodological issues related to the anthropological study of tourism and pilgrimage, the author interrogates the logic of such dualities and focuses on their shared phenomenological attribute of perspectivalism, a particular way of perceiving the value and use of a destination. Offering a new apologia for the study of tourism as a “global cultural form” produced through a “field of production,” the author advocates greater consideration of this phenomenological definition to bridge disciplinary divides, and for extending anthropological tourism research into academic and practitioner-related fields.*

Keywords: *anthropology; tourism; pilgrimage; perspectivalism; field of touristic production.*

* Department of Anthropology and Sociology, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 775 S. Church Street, Old Library, West Chester, PA 19380, USA, michael@michaeldigiovine.com.

**THE SELF IN THE WORLD AND THE WORLD IN THE SELF:
THE SOAS MA IN
ANTHROPOLOGY OF TRAVEL, TOURISM, AND PILGRIMAGE**

Tom SELWYN*

Abstract. *This paper responds to the invitation by the guest editor of the Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends to contribute a paper on the formation and present state of the Masters degree in Anthropology of Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage (MA ATTP, henceforth referred to as the MA and the subject as ATTP) presently in its third year at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Two principal and parallel main aims here are to outline how the MA took its present shape, and to discuss its theoretical underpinnings.*

Keywords: *theory; education; history of the discipline; School of Oriental and African Studies.*

* SOAS University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, UK, ts14@soas.ac.uk.