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Chapter 3

Engaging with the Hosts and Guests

Some Methodological Reflections on the Anthropology of Tourism

Maarja Kaaristo

INTRODUCTION: TOURISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology has traditionally engaged in studying various social and cultural phenomena, focusing on the individual as the active agent in their (re)creation (1). The study of tourism would seem a naturally interesting topic in that regard; however, it is a relatively new subject area within the discipline. The first publication focusing exclusively on the subject dates back to 1963 when Nuñez published his paper "Weekendismo in a Mexican Village," (2) a study of interaction between the residents of a fishing village with visiting affluent city dwellers in the framework of acculturation theory. The study of tourism as an anthropological subject matter gathered momentum slowly and steadily and, by 1974, there were enough anthropologists researching the topic for Valene Smith to organize the first American Anthropological Association tourism symposium. The papers presented there eventually became Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism, (3) a seminal book and an important milestone in the development of the discipline.

The "discovery" of this topic took place rather late, especially when considering some sociologists were publishing on the subject in the first half of the twentieth century, most notably Durant's *The Problem of Leisure* (4). The reason for that is what Burns (5) calls an "avoidance relationship," consisting of three main aspects. First, the academic study of tourism is quite often (outside of the dedicated tourism and tourism management departments) seen as something frivolous, a pursuit a "serious" scholar would not engage in. This attitude is probably most famously depicted in David Lodge's 1991 novel *Paradise News*, (6) featuring a hedonistic, pleasure-seeking anthropologist, conducting research on Hawaiian tourism. Secondly, the relationship between anthropology and tourism is somewhat too close and intermingled

for anthropologists' liking, as studying tourism would inevitably bring forth an uncomfortable question of in what ways do a tourist and an anthropologist actually differ (at least in the first stages of fieldwork). In order to deal with these questions, the anthropologist would have had to turn their gaze on themselves as an important actor within the study and on the research field— and this self-reflexive position is something that was only fully internalized in the social sciences in the 1980s within the postmodernist frame of thinking (7). The third reason for the avoidance of the topic was the general lack of attentiveness to, and awareness of, the significance of tourism as a social and cultural as well as historical phenomenon. Because of the above-mentioned motives, as well as anthropology's traditional disciplinary focus of studying non-Western cultures, anthropologists seem to have been under the impression that studying tourism would mean studying mainly tourism generating areas and (predominantly) Western tourists, which is therefore better left to the disciplines of economics and sociology.

The topics that were discussed in the anthropological study of tourism have thus far mainly focused on the questions of commodification and acculturation, involving an "investigation of change supposedly fostered by Western tourism in some society or sub-society on the Western periphery" (8). In her review of the main issues discussed in the anthropology of tourism, Stronza (9) identifies two key themes in the field: the tourism origins focusing on the tourists, and the tourism impacts focusing on the locals. She suggests that the factors explaining local involvement in host communities should be further studied, as well as the various effects traveling has on the tourists' attitudes, values, and behaviors. Stronza acknowledges that in her own research she too, like many anthropologists, focuses mainly on the socioeconomic inequalities and disparities created by international tourism. While a lot of valuable research has been produced in this frame of thinking, it has also been criticized for often reducing people living and working in tourist destination regions to passive recipients of the outside influences, and thus oftentimes creating simplified dualisms of an empowered guest versus a disempowered host (10). Therefore, it is important to remember that the "centre-periphery tourism" (11) that has long preoccupied anthropologists is just one possible avenue of study. There is a need to turn the gaze back to tourism generating societies, to take the hosts' agency more into consideration, to study the influence the hosts have on the guests, as well as just focus more on the "centrecentre" tourism. Furthermore, this is also especially important since the binary opposition of host-guest has been contested for a while now as the concepts of local, tourist, migrant, visitor, etc. have become increasingly blurred and fluid in the "glocal" world. As Sherlock (12) noted in her 2001 study of an Australian tourism town, the "overlaps between host and guest, migration and tourism, were taken for granted by most participants yet appear to be largely

unarticulated in the tourism literature." In the past 15 years, these overlaps have started receiving more and more attention and have resulted in more detailed analysis on changing tourism and mobilities related phenomena and have been labeled "niche tourism," (13) "lifestyle tourism," (14) "lifestyle migration," (15) "residential tourism," (16) "second home tourism," (17) and, more coherently, bringing many of them together, "lifestyle mobilities" (18).

Leite and Graburn (19) do not regard the anthropology of tourism as a coherent subdiscipline, and suggest that we instead talk about "anthropological interventions" in tourism research as, indeed, the anthropology of tourism does not (yet?) hold an established place within the discipline that for instance anthropology of religion or environmental anthropology do. There are currently no high-ranking journals focusing exclusively on the anthropology of tourism; however, anthropologists do publish prolifically in general tourism studies journals, such as Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Travel Research, Current Issues in Tourism, Tourist Studies, Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, and others. Yet this subfield is very active and growing, as there are international conferences held; numerous panels, sessions and workshops organized; books and PhD theses written; and more and more commonly, courses taught in higher learning institutions, including a specific program at the SOAS University of London. There is an Anthropology of Tourism Interest Group at the American Anthropological Association (AAA), and a Commission on the Anthropology of Tourism at the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES).

An anthropological approach to tourism means asking particular anthropologically guided research questions and gathering primary empirical data using a set of research methods characteristic to the discipline (such as participant observation). In regards of theories, there is a tendency toward interpretivist, rather than political and economic, paradigms (20). Anthropologists have without doubt contributed significantly to the development of critical tourism theories—for example, studying tourism as a liminal stage and a secular ritual, (21) or a catalyst for cultural commodification (22). They have studied tourism imaginaries (23) and interrogated different approaches pertaining to the idea of "authenticity" (24, 25). There is, however, definitely a need for more theorizing in the field, in order for it to be fully realized as a subdiscipline.

These anthropological investigations into tourism are also part of a larger, and more loosely defined discipline (or indiscipline (26)) of tourism studies: a multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary project comprising of various disciplines in social sciences and humanities such as geography, sociology, business and management, anthropology, cultural studies, development studies, psychology, history, political science, and others (27). Yet, despite of this wide variety of disciplines, and by extension the potential methodologies associated with them, positivist and post-positivist research philosophies and quantitative

methods have mostly dominated this emergent field until the end of the twentieth century. This means that qualitative methods and other epistemological approaches, such as those grounded in critical theory, social constructivism, postmodernism, and phenomenology, have been mostly marginalized (28). The existing qualitative studies in tourism also tended to take more of an industry and policy-making orientated view on the subject, treating the tourist as primarily a consumer, and focusing mainly on potential applications in business, management, and marketing (29). This marginalization is well exemplified in Tribe's overview of the field that divides tourism research into two main areas: "tourism business studies" and "non-business tourism studies," (30) essentially defining studying the social and cultural topics in tourism by negation.

In tourism business studies, qualitative methods, even when applied, remain mainly a set of data collection methods and the opportunities to utilize them for critical thinking and analyzing different ways of knowing and being in regard to tourism, have often not been taken (31). Jamal and Hollinshead (32) have called for moving toward more interpretive qualitative tourism research and for departing from the above-mentioned static and largely (post)positivist means of knowledge production. In the past 15 years, these calls have been indeed answered by sociology, anthropology, human geography, and related disciplines providing more and more individual-centered critical research grounded in empirical data but also highly theorized (33). Furthermore, as a discipline, anthropology is uniquely equipped for these endeavors by using unique methodological approaches and by asking research questions that other disciplines might not. This chapter is therefore looking at ways how to better utilize classical anthropological and ethnological methodology, namely that of ethnography, for tourism research. I will argue that anthropological methods applied in combination of the practices of (Eastern) European ethnology, and in the framework of the new mobilities paradigm, would give especially fruitful results in understanding the contemporary phenomenon of tourism.

REFLEXIVE ETHNOGRAPHY AND TOURISM RESEARCH

Nash suggests ethnography, "small, first-hand, intensive, exploratory study of people in the field" as a useful approach for researching tourism (34). Ethnography, well-known and well used in anthropology, is a methodology where the operational and theoretical parts of the study are interconnected, incorporating critical social and cultural theory as well as a method for documenting and studying the phenomenon at hand (35). As such, it is especially well suited for the task of qualitative tourism research to "understand the human dimensions of society, which in tourism include its social and cultural implications" (36).

In terms of the methods of data collection, ethnographical research is participatory, bringing together the perspective of the research participants, researcher, and the wider theoretical considerations informing the work and growing out from it. The ethnographer is the main catalyst of creating and constructing data, usually in the form of field notes and qualitative interviews. Any aspect of tourism can, and should be, ethnographically studied, including but not limited to its main and defining characteristics, causes, effects, and various processes involved. Such research would typically be small-scale, empiricallydriven with original primary data, reflexive, present the *emic* insider's view of the studied phenomena, analytical as well as theoretically focused.

The main method used in ethnographic research is participant observation, pioneered by anthropologists in the beginning of the twentieth century and most explicitly described and explained first by Malinowski (37). Participant observation means immersing yourself deliberately and totally into the studied phenomena with the intention of acquiring knowledge from the point of view of the studied group and thus obtaining first-hand knowledge of their lifeworlds. It is "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning both the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and culture" (38). The method, therefore, requires a conscious and ongoing, processual introspection and self-examination on the researcher's part-both in relation to the studied topic as well as research participants. In contemporary anthropology, the participant observation is usually characterized by living in the researched location for a longer time period (ideally at least a year); acquiring the local language for communication with the studied group; actively participating in the everyday lives of the studied people; using informal interviews for data collection; engaging in informal observing in various situations; gathering data in the form of field notes; and using both implicit as well as explicit information in the analysis (39).

All researchers, but especially anthropologists and ethnologists, are closely connected to and therefore influence their research objects, subjects, participants, and environments in varied ways and degrees. Thus, it is common practice for them to consider, trace and discuss the ways in which they affect their research from initial selection of topic to the published (or, in case of visual anthropology, exhibited or screened) result. This means taking painstaking care in being aware of their influence on producing the data as well as how their presence in the field affects their ways of knowledge construction. Both the relationship with the research participants as well as the researcher's own subjective values and identities have to be taken into account (40). When engaging in what Davies calls reflexive ethnography, the ethnographer therefore is constantly in the process in developing suitable forms of study "that fully acknowledge and utilize subjective experience and reflection on it as an intrinsic part of research" (41).

Hall (42) criticizes large parts of tourism research for its lack of reflexivity, which he regards "critical to all tourism research practice, even if it is not as well acknowledged as it should be." Employing reflexive ethnography, where the researcher's personal connection to the research participants forms an important basis for the analysis of the gathered data as well as subsequent theorizing is a fruitful way for moving toward more interpretive and theoretically grounded tourism research. Reflexivity, an endeavor to look at one's own research activities from data collection to writing in a critical, insightful, and analytical manner, should be one of the main features of contemporary tourism ethnography.

What then could be the best ways of applying ethnographic methodology to various tourism related phenomena and retain the integrity and quality of the data necessary for engaging with the methods associated with it? When studying tourism, specific issues arising from the nature of the field(s) and the inherently temporal qualities of the phenomenon must be taken into consideration. I suggest that turning our focus to European ethnology with its tradition of shorter term fieldworks and combine it with various mobile methods might give good results.

BACK AND FORTH ON THE MOBILE FIELD OF TOURISM

Participant observation, a trademark ethnographic research method, has also proved to be extremely popular outside of the discipline and has been utilized by virtually all other fields practicing qualitative research; one can find studies using (or claiming to use) it, ranging from nursing to education to marketing. However, Ingold criticizes this development, arguing that in many cases the concept of ethnography is used as a substitute to other forms of qualitative research which therefore dilutes the original idea:

How many research proposals have we read, coming from such fields as sociology, social policy, social psychology and education, in which the applicant explains that he or she will conduct "ethnographic interviews" with a sample of randomly selected informants, the data from which will then be processed by means of a recommended software package in order to yield "results"? Such a procedure, in which ethnographic appears to be a modish substitute for qualitative, offends every principle of proper, rigorous anthropological inquiry—including long-term and openended commitment, generous attentiveness, relational depth, and sensitivity to context—and we are right to protest against it (43). In tourism research, however, it is only possible to apply the classical, long-term participant observation to certain topics: mainly when studying the "hosts"—those living and working in tourist destinations. Studying the tourists with the same method, however, is more difficult and complex for the temporal and mobile nature of tourism and tourist practices. This means that the anthropologists have had to and will have to adapt their research methods in order to capture the fleeting phenomenon, practice, and experience that is tourism (44).

One of the solutions would be making use of other, equally participatory, ethnographical research methods, that have developed in parallel, but also in dialogue with sociocultural anthropology-namely those from (Eastern) European ethnology. The discipline of ethnology historically grew out of German Volkskunde (transl. the study of people), traditionally focused on one's own (folk) culture as opposed to Völkerkunde (transl. the study of the world's peoples), and now commonly associated with social and cultural anthropology. There have been many discussions (that still go on today) on the differences and similarities of the two disciplines. Arguments range from the histories of the two research traditions, their position in national academic hierarchies, as well as their positions in regards to their respective centes and peripheries (as ethnology is generally more associated with the Continental European academic perspective, and the anthropological centre lies in the Anglo-American sphere (or, if including France, "Franglus") (45). Another important point of discussion for the (dis-)similarities of the two academic traditions, and one that has been reflected on less in the literature, is the question of fieldwork methods (46).

Both the traditions of ethnology and sociocultural anthropology are primarily qualitative endeavors, relying on ethnographical fieldwork, where the most common methods continue to be participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. However, there is a certain difference in executing the method historically: while in anthropology one of the most important requirements for fieldwork is long-term stay, ethnology has relied more on multiple short-term field-trips (usually to the researcher's own country of residence/origin), and uses more targeted interviews, with concentrated, intensive observations. Brković and Hodges (47) identify these contrasting two approaches to fieldwork as "extended stay" (that they categorize as "Anglo-Saxon" based) meaning spending at least a year in one location; and "back and forth," that they label as a "Balkan and Eastern European" approach, where researchers make short trips to the studied field, sometimes repeatedly over many years.

It has to be noted, however, that the whole discipline of Continental European ethnology, including Scandinavian culture analysis, actually have followed, or follow, this particular model. Löfgren (48) identifies four key aspects of

European ethnology's research methodology. First, it was, and is, a discipline dedicated to the study of the (seemingly) trivial and every day, putting painstaking efforts to record and document the minutest details. Secondly, it relies on ethnographic fieldwork, a method that it shares with anthropology, but the regularity and intensity of the participant observation differs depending upon various circumstances. As traditionally ethnologists have studied their own culture (or the ones that are rather similar to them), the questions of one's relationship to the field are paramount—which puts a great importance on the reflexive approach. Ethnology's third feature is its frequent use of historical perspective and dimension (since ethnologists have often been trained in the history departments.) Finally, its fourth characteristic is its flexibility, a great sensitivity to use and combine various perspectives, theories, approaches, and methodologies that could be used to research different phenomena.

When discussing the long- and short-term fieldwork models, Brković and Hodges (49) define "movement" as one of the most important issues to consider: the epistemological movement of the researcher across various social and cultural spaces as well as her movement between the "field" and the "desk." Indeed, anthropological knowledge about certain phenomena, such as tourism, can no longer be defined by utilizing just one particular kind of research method such as long-term participant observation-it can and should also be acquired by other means. Tourism is "no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption: [it] has broken away from its beginnings as a relatively minor and ephemeral ritual of modern national life to become a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organized" (50). In the context of Eastern and Central European tourism anthropology, Banaszkiewicz, Graburn, and Owsianowska (51) identify several important avenues for further research such as the individualization of the tourism practices; the values and identities of the traveler; the relationship between tourism, recreation, and leisure; socialist and industrial heritage; glocalization, and the often complicated relationship with history and memory.

A fruitful way to study these themes would be to utilize "back and forth" ethnography combined with the techniques of mobile methods developed in recent years as part of the new mobilities paradigm. Theorizing in terms of mobile practices started in the mid-2000s with Sheller and Urry arguing that the issues of mobility had mostly been excluded from the thus far static and "a-mobile" social sciences, failing to study "how the spatialities of social life presuppose (and frequently involve conflict over) both the actual and the imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event" (52).

As a sociocultural phenomenon, tourism is not just a temporary form of mobility, but also different mobilities influence, and are influenced by, tourism (53). Analyzing tourism from the mobilities perspective brings attention to various practices that are much more than linear movement, but are rather lived experiences where attention ought to be paid to the practices, materialities, technologies, and both the imagined and virtual mobilities. Tourist practices should be researched by "trying to move with, and to be moved by, the fleeting, distributed, multiple, non-casual, sensory, emotional and kinaesthetic" (54). This means doing ethnography while moving alongside the research participants, such as the tourists, tour guides, hotel workers, tour groups, employees of hotel chains, crews of airlines, etc. Mavric and Urry (55) point namely to ethnography as a starting point for mobile research techniques that can be used to study and conceptualize the world as a network of mobilities - but also immobilities. Mobile tourism ethnography can then be done in various (social, geographical, hierarchical, administrative, etc.) spaces and places simultaneously. (56) coupling participant observation with the use of "go-along" method, (57) netnography, (58) sensory ethnography, (59) participant diaries, (60) as well as utilizing visual and literary sources and archival material.

The combination of these various methods allows to study the complexity of contemporary tourism, where it is increasingly difficult to define what is "field," as well as where and when does it begin and end:

My research experience was not marked solely by "leaving for the field" for an extended period of time. Mine was the experience of continually coming and going to and from the field, to the point where, at times, the field became indistinguishable from home. ... Blurring field/home boundaries was further enhanced by technologies that facilitated these crossings by linking my field with home, home with other fields and my home with other homes. ... At times, I did not need to physically travel to the field to be able to reach my "key" informants or for them to reach me. ... Keeping the field and home conceptually separate and distinct in practice, a key marker of "real" fieldwork, was impossible for me (61).

Caputo, quoted above, studied the gender performances of schoolchildren in Toronto, the city that she herself resided in. Indeed, when talking about "back and forth" research, the inevitable question arises: back and forth from where and to what? (62) The blurred (and further blurring) boundaries of "home" and "field," are extremely important in the qualitative study of tourism, which often needs to start with reconceptualizing two important aspects of the field: the place and the duration. Studying spatially fixed groups of people for longer or shorter periods of time can prove difficult in a tourism context, and so other methods would have to be chosen and adopted. For example, one could decide on studying a particular tourism space by staying for months in a specific tourist locale (63) or actively travel with the tourists, by becoming either a tourist oneself, or a tour guide (64). Sometimes the studied group (the tourists) and the place (the tourist destinations) are not permanent and stable in any 79

way, but temporary and mobile, as groups and individuals move about various destinations for differing periods of time. This means, that subscribing to the classical one-year extended stay may not be feasible, or even possible, as tourism in itself is a phenomenon mainly characterized by its temporal and fleeting nature.

Therefore, following the ethnological back-and-forth short-term fieldwork model can provide better results, as long as the fieldworker subscribes to the "ontological commitment," (65) a participant observation where the knowledge to the studied phenomena organically grows out of the lived experience and where knowing is not separated from being. The knowledge about the world thus obtained consists of skills of perceiving and decision capacities that develop during the sensory, and sensuous, direct engagements with the surrounding world. The "observation" in participant observation never takes a step back in trying to be distant or "objective"—it always includes being part of, and present in, the situation-specific network of phenomena, events, people, and ideas that is the studied field. The researcher has to constantly reflect on the processes of data generation and the ways of approaching it— since it will later reflect on the analysis of the data.

Participant observation, therefore, can only be successful if the researcher is able to immerse herself in the studied field, regardless of its temporal and spatial properties. The mere fact of being in the field (for however long) does not necessarily guarantee immersion, because it can only be achieved via the ethnographical practice of becoming part of certain social, cultural, and political relations. Immersing yourself in the field means being part of (an always incomplete) process of finding your conceptual place in changing networks of various social and cultural relations and, therefore, the temporal length of stay is less important than taking into account the particularities of certain research problems (66). Studying tourism ethnographically would then mean producing mobile micro-ethnographies, where the researcher traces the hosts and/or guests across and within their numerous activity sites, and where various places, spaces, sites, and people are linked more or less loosely together into a general touristscape.

CONCLUSION

After the initial academic avoidance, the subject of tourism has become an important part of the general discipline of anthropology, and it has a lot more to offer to it, from particular research questions to its research methodologies. Of those methodologies, ethnography especially has translated extremely well to tourism studies in particular but also to wider social sciences and humanities in general. Anthropology has traditionally focused on studying traditional, small-scale societies and communities (often in "exotic" locations) and when turning its focus to tourism, this empirical focus continued, as anthropologists mainly analyzed the influences of international tourism and the social and cultural change caused by it.

traditionally practiced in anthropology As however, the ethnographical method is temporally rather demanding, requiring an extensive stay at the field (usually at least a year). Yet in tourism research, this is not always feasible or possible, requiring certain modifications to the methodology. While anthropology's relationship with (Eastern) European ethnology has been well discussed from the perspective of disciplinary history, its specific fieldwork methods, namely short-term ethnography that is still grounded in the anthropological sensibilities, have received much less attention. This chapter is an attempt to bring the short-term field methods specific to European ethnology back into the dialogue with general anthropology, to employ them for studying tourism in the framework of mobilities studies.

Pursuing short-term ethnography in combination with the mobile methods as proposed here is a fruitful way of researching many forms and expressions of tourism that are otherwise difficult to capture due to their specific temporal and spatial qualities. This chapter has discussed these issues in a more general level; future studies, however, could provide a more detailed review on tourism studies conducted in the framework of (Eastern) European ethnology in regards to their methodologies. Further discussion on the new mobilities paradigm and its intersections with anthropology, as well as tourism studies, is also needed. Anthropological research on tourism has at last found its rightful place within tourism studies, and therefore there are many reasons to argue that it is gathering more and more momentum as a lively, and fruitful, area of study, hopefully in its way of becoming finally a more recognized and practiced subdiscipline of anthropology.

NOTES

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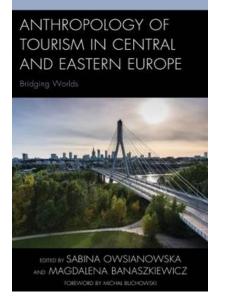


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Anthropology of Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe: Bridging Worlds

Edited by Sabina Owsianowska and Magdalena Banaszkiewicz



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"Anthropology of Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe is a pioneering collection, edited by two renowned Polish authorities, on the anthropology of tourism that demonstrates the dynamic nature of travel and tourism and emphasizes the freshness of this research area. This is the first study of its kind to give voice to a wide range of research from scholars from Central and Eastern Europe and is an essential source for researchers, teachers, and students of tourism, anthropology, human geography, and European studies." —Hana Horáková, Metropolitan University Prague

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In Anthropology of Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe: Bridging Worlds, Sabina Owsianowska and Magdalena Banaszkiewicz examine the limitations of the anthropological study of tourism, which stem from both the domination of researchers representing the Anglophone circle as well as the current state of tourism studies in Central and Eastern Europe. This edited collection contributes to the wider discussion of the geopolitics of knowledge through its focus on the anthropological background of tourism studies and its inclusion of contributors from Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Poland.

Part of The Anthropology of Tourism: Heritage, Mobility, and Society edited by Michael A. Di Giovine and Noel B. Salazar

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