

Editorial

There has been a rich mosaic displaying a multiplicity of disciplinary and paradigmatic approaches that have been brought to bear on tourism phenomena (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Jamal and Kim 2005). As Jafari and Ritchie (1981: 22) rather quaintly asserted more than three decades ago, “tourism studies, like its customers who do not recognize geographical boundaries, does not recognize disciplinary demarcations”. All of thirty years since that pronouncement, Tourism Studies has grown into a prolific and ‘entangled’ intellectual space (Pernecky 2010: 1). Within this entangled and densely rich intellectual space on the nature of tourism as a social phenomenon, there are thus multiple (competing) critical perspectives and scholars have pointed out what is increasingly apparent by now, that the theoretical net does indeed to be cast rather widely so that tourism studies is constantly refreshed by developments in social and cultural theory and by theory from other disciplines.

This special issue is based upon a social science and human ecological approach to understanding the significance of tourism in contemporary society. Human ecology is as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary as tourism studies, and allows one to probe the spatial and temporal interrelationships between humans and their natural, social, and built environments within a tourism context. It was Holden (2005) amongst other scholarly voices who highlighted tourism as a multidisciplinary area of study with lush and varied theoretical underpinnings, reminding us that the economic and political structures of society influence the manifestation of tourism at a global level, as it does at a local level, but that the economic aspect is but one dimension of tourism studies. For in addition to being defined in relation to its production and consumption and its large economic impact aspect, tourism is increasingly being interpreted as a significant dimension of temporary mobility and circulation (Urry 2000), in and within the spatial and temporal environment/s.

Scholars working in Tourism Studies are seen to consistently challenge and stretch the ontological foundations of tourism while likewise calling for (recognition of) greater plurality of epistemological approaches and methods (Coles et al. 2005).

The recent paper by Pernecky (2010), while supporting the argument that the emergence of critical scholarship is important for broader theorisations about tourism, goes further in seeking to challenge the reader to think beyond the traditional notion/s of tourism/s and stresses the importance of emic and situated approaches to research. By drawing on the work of Heidegger and the concept of *being-in-the-world* his paper emphasises that everyday life cannot be separated either from tourists or from researchers who act as the (culturally situated) storytellers. According to Pernecky (2010) tourism is a phenomenon that can ‘tell’ us about the world as both a natural and constructed environment. This, according to Pernecky is a “a proposal which summons a theoretical shift as to what tourism *is* and *does* and what it *can be* and *can do*” (2010: 1). The contribution of these kinds of work on tourism in pushing and moving beyond traditional ways of understanding tourism, bring rich theoretical and philosophical insights in highlighting the importance of exploring the multitude of meanings which inform our understanding/s in and of tourism, and the temporal and spatial environments within which humans enact various relationships.

The articles in this issue of *Journal of Human Ecology* in turn illustrate how the area of study has become enriched by theoretical perspectives from multiple fields. The papers direct our gaze to nuanced scholarship that pays critical attention to both theory and in some instances ethnographic and empirical reference points. Many begin by questioning basic assumptions about tourism and the ways in which the subject is theorized and conceptualized. Naming this special issue with special Reference to *Human Ecology and Tourism Interactions: Special Reference to South Africa* is thus an attempt to meaningfully contribute to the intellectual conversation and further bring to the fore, scholarship that reveals the ever expanding intellectual landscape in tourism studies that is about *both* the conceptual and theoretical landscape of tourism, as well as about the people and their lives as they work and carve their livelihoods around (forms and environments of) tourism. The contributors in this special is-

sue variously inhabit and write from, and within the fluidly understood and sometimes porous disciplinary domains of, geography, heritage studies, sociology and development studies and cultural anthropology and gender studies, and this special issue reflects as such, these broad interdisciplinary perspectives.

This issue thus reflects a decidedly Southern African critical focus. Two papers are spatially located within the SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries of Zimbabwe and Botswana that border South Africa, while the rest of the papers are squarely located with the 'glocal' context of South Africa. The papers ethnographically located in South Africa, variously focus their gaze on the sites of the KwaZulu-Natal Province coastline, the space of Robben Island, off the coast of the Western Province and the famed city of Cape Town, and the rich Wetlands of St Lucia. The papers by Thenjiwe Meyiwe and Urmilla Bob and Cheryl Potgieter reiterate through their work, the assertion of Ateljevic et al. (2009) of tourism as a world-making agent that makes, re-makes, and also demakes places. Meyiwe looks at the phenomenon of international tourism in the (local) South Africa context, with South Africa as the destination of choice drawing tourists from the global corners of the world around the exoticised notions of the authentic Africa, and authentic (sic) *African*. While Meyiwe's paper is a throwback to the grand old Victorian travel to exotic and romantic (African) spaces of the world, complete with animals and bead wearing 'native women', Urmilla Bob and Cheryl Potgieter cast a wide critical eye on travel to South Africa within a global(ised) sport and development context and the lure of a mega (international) sporting event against the backdrop of (travel to) sunny blue skied South Africa. Vivian Ojong and Lindy Stiebel both take as their starting (empirical) points, the 'context', and in English Studies scholar, Lindy Stiebel's case, the 'text' of South Africa, before moving to contextualising and locating their discussions beyond South Africa. While Vivian Ojong begins with the qualitative insights garnered from South African academics as the (internationally) travelling tourists, Lindy Stiebel takes us on the touristic constructed literary trail in Rome, but provides an emic and situated perspective as she stays with the insider based insights of her South African perspective as both researcher in tourism, and as *tourist herself*.

The papers in this issue are thus a vital contribution to the international conversation on tourism for precisely their point of empirical departure; their offerings of contextualising the tourism discourse within local situated contexts of South Africa. In their paper '*Participatory risk assessment of tourism development in coastal areas – challenges and implications for management on the KwaZulu-Natal coast*', the authors Fathima Ahmed and Naadira Nadasen look at the geographic concentration of coastal tourism and its associated development impacts in the context of their strong association and proximity to the littoral zone. Using this empirical point of entree they also raise issues of normative collaboration, policy and science claiming that these three domains rarely 'meet' or enter into mutual conversation. Their position is that contestations over natural resources are deeply and inextricably entrenched in ecological, economic and social dynamics and assert that these, however, tend to favour the economic, and claim this as being crucially inadequate. This concern and greater awareness of tourism impacts on the people directly associated with tourism (who possibly remain outside any direct benefits as such) is continued in the paper entitled '*Rebranding of the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park in South Africa: Reflections on Benefits and Challenges for the Former of St Lucia*', where writers Sultan Khan, Noel Chellan and Mdu Mtshali vociferously assert that much of the region's natural biodiversity has become commodified through the (globalised) processes and dictates of branding and re-branding in order to harness a share of the international ecotourism market. By working through a hermeneutic of qualitative inquiry and interviews with various categories of stakeholders, the paper probes the extent to which this re-branding (from a globalised to a localised ecotourism name destination) has reproduced itself in terms of benefits, both tangible and intangible in the all 'White' town of St Lucia.

Similarly, in their paper, for which they carried out qualitative research in Botswana; '*Tourism impacts on subsistence agriculture: A case study of the Okavango Delta*', the authors Philippa Harrison and Brij Maharaj point out that the booming tourism industry in the so called developing world has been widely viewed as a source of investment, employment and foreign exchange with the embedded assumption that

the economic benefits of tourism would somehow trickle down to stimulate other sectors of the economy, including agriculture. However, a critical focus is drawn on the concerns in the wake of the rural community in the Okavango Delta, shifting the focus from agriculture to tourism. The authors assert that the major contemporary challenge facing the Okavango Delta region is an attempt to support the tourism industry without compromising the traditional livelihoods of its local inhabitants.

Ateljevic et al. (2005) explain that the 'new' research in tourism arose from a qualitative mode of inquiry and is underpinned to a great extent by debates from sociology, anthropology and cultural geography. The example they cite is the *Blackwell Companion to Tourism* edited by Hall et al. (2004), which brings together a variety of critically engaged tourism research. The authors of '*Tourism impacts on subsistence agriculture*' working from their disciplinary foci of geography, bring to the fore, some of the entangled sociological as well as economic issues that impact on both lives and livelihoods and remind us that, given the emerging dynamics, the Okavango Delta presents a unique opportunity to observe a kind of 're-ordering' on both people and the land. This is because, as the authors assert, the space provides opportunity, to not only study the impact of tourism on rural agriculture, to 'observe the negotiation and competition which occurs between global tourism and local agriculture, but also to review the inevitable transformation of local culture, economy and physical landscape'.

Tourism has become an important ordering of modernity as well as global society thereby resulting in a vast spectrum of *ordering effects* and *impacts* (variously labelled as cosmopolitanism or consumerism processes) within everyday contexts. The embeddedness of tourism in modern social, ecological and economic practices has created a significant space for human ecological research which may not only be of relevance for tourism itself, but for a deeper understanding of the 'everyday', as well as wider patterns of being and of living. In the paper '*Eco-tourism, Conservancies and Sustainable Development: The Case of Zimbabwe*' Victor Ngonidzashu Muzvidziwa presents a definition of eco-tourism that puts an emphasis on conservation through utilisation, instead of merely presenting a hermeneutic of preservation. Eco-tourism in this paper, is seen as incorporating

both consumptive and non-consumption aspects. It is a relational definition that stresses community participation in decision making processes in relation to eco-touristic ventures and benefits derived flowing back to local communities. The paper examines what Muzvidziwa labels as the 'triple role' of eco-tourism in the protection, utilisation and conservation of natural and cultural resources.

The notion of tourism is, as alluded to already, open to multiple conceptualizations which rest on the ontological, epistemological, and paradigmatic assumptions of the researcher. This means that the conceptualization of tourism remains open to substantial contestation. Franklin (2004: 278) asserts that "tourism is not just what tourists do at tourist sites, it is also how they came to be created as tourists; as a self-ordering as well as an ordered travelling culture", by the researchers one adds. From this standpoint, tourism can, and has been linked to a variety of globalizing effects such as place making, cosmopolitanism, and consumerism, all of which lend themselves to being critically unpacked within disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. The overall aim of anthropological tourism studies is to understand the tourist experience and tourism industry from the perspective of both tourists themselves and those whose worlds, or constructed versions of them, are being displayed. The authors of the papers, '*Anthropology of Experience: Touring the Past at Robben Island*' and '*The South African Nguni Female Body and Traditional Dress as a National Identity Exploit*' (re)visit, within the South African context, the classic notions and constructions of 'tourist' and 'toured', 'host' and 'guest' (see Smith 1989; Nash and Smith 1991; Nash 2007), binaried realities which are both open to one's 'gaze' (see Urry 1990).

In '*Anthropology of Experience: Touring the Past at Robben Island*', Maheshvari Naidu works from a self confessed transdisciplinary orientation, positioning her work in both anthropology and tourism studies. Her paper draws on the theoretical work of the post structural Victor Turner and brings to the study of tourism, the anthropological concepts of 'performance', 'memory' and 'experience'. The paper looks at the *construction* of the site of Robben Island Prison Museum, in Cape Town South Africa as a performance space for the reliving and experiencing of a collective shared past and history, and probes how international visitors to the site,

come to experience the space. The tourism phenomenon has been said to form “a significant modality” through which international and transnational modern life is organized” (Franklin and Crang 2001: 7), and is claimed as having the ability to help populations to “re-imagine themselves” (Hollinshead 2004: 34). This re-imagining is something that Naidu attempts to convey through a thematic analysis of the narratives of the participants.

In her paper *‘The South African Nguni Female Body and Traditional Dress as a National Identity Exploit’* Thenjiwe Meyiwe proceeds through feminist critical tools and brings up again the notion of place ‘making’ and ‘remaking’, this time through the ‘exploiting’ and branding on body (of female). She plays on and teases the notions of ‘export’ and ‘exploit’ and rightly bends our attention to the sometimes gendered dimensions of the (damaging) tourist gaze. She asserts that most South African public places portray glamorous multiple images of what the country has on offer as part of its identity and heritage face. The paper however, interrogates exactly *what* these images represent and *who* the actual beneficiaries of the images are, arguing that women, who are in most cases bearers of the images, (producers or models for the artefacts) are accorded little benefit. Employing feminism post-colonial theories, she unpacks how the tourism industry has ‘ab/used’ the Nguni female identity and body and related artefacts for commercial benefits. Using data gathered from women traders, the paper argues that the Nguni female body has been used and abused. Thus more recent work in Tourism Studies are more than simply being about knowing something, they are about also a *way of knowing* and they demand richer ‘awarenesses’ into *ways of knowing and being*, and require a commitment to and inquiry into, the role and function of ‘tourism’.

In *‘Mega-events and Tourism Impacts: Foreign Visitor Perceptions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa’*, authors Urmilla Bob and Cheryl Potgieter tell us that much research on mega-events, tends to focus on the dimension of economic impacts. Their point of contention is that very few studies examine visitor perceptions of the event in order to establish (visitor) experiences and concerns. Given this lacunae, their paper examines both the positive and negative linked relationships between tourism and the hosting of mega-events. They locate their discussion and analysis by focusing on the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which was Africa’s first mega-

event. Their article concludes that tourism outcomes related to the hosting of mega-events need to be more carefully planned, if more widespread benefits are to be construed and realised within the tourism industry, and more especially in and within the various categories of the local communities.

The Mobilities Paradigm (Urry 2006) challenges the reader to ponder places or environment in a *different way* and compels a wonderfully critical and reflexive lens to thinking about the meaning and ‘realness’ of a place and space. Recent work in tourism studies also embraces ideas that reveal the many things tourism *does* (or is involved in) and also what it *is* or *can be* (Ateljevic et al. 2009). A case in point is perhaps the paper by Vivian Ojong entitled *‘Academic Travel: Travelling for Work’*. In this paper Ojong endeavours to show how academics become part of a cross-cultural production, cultural and ideological circulation. The paper reveals both the individualised process of (academic) participation in tourism as well as the by-product of their (the academics’) participation therein, underpinning Hollinshead’s (2008) assertion that there is increasingly a turn towards more constructivist and interpretivist thought and practice in how one approaches tourism and tourism studies.

Bringing up part of the tail end of the journal contributions, and taking us the furthest in a sense (geographically speaking) from the shores of South Africa, is author Lindy Stiebel whose paper is titled, *‘When in Rome...?’: Literary tourism in Rome from a South African Perspective’*. This paper reminds us that the post-NRF (National Research Foundation) phase of KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) Literary Tourism in South Africa has seen the development of a number of literary trails throughout the province, funded by area-based municipalities and the National Arts Council of the country. Stiebel points out that a literary trail, in essence, ‘links’ sites together and is inevitably a construct: in effect, a strung together narrative linking places sequentially in an environment which may in fact have had a far less seamless coexistence with the writer. Both Stiebel and her paper move from a discussion of literary tourism, to the concept of literary tourism sites and projects in the KZN province in South Africa, and then crosses ‘continents and contexts’ to a discussion of the literary trail in Rome, Italy. It does this however, by retaining a link with South Africa and attempts to present an insider view on the perceptions and ‘experiencing of the trail’ by a South African tourist/researcher.

Lastly, whether local or international, tourism has in its shadow the very real possibilities and actualities of crime as both an effect and result of tourism movements and activities which presupposes circuits of moving objects, people (tourists) as well as their artefacts of exchange (money) that facilitates much of the touristic movements. In as much as South Africa is a sunny blue-skied destination of choice for many international tourists from the global (and colder) North, and offering the allure of an utopian space; a healthy rand exchange, authentic and African location (and a 'more developed' than a developing country), exotic animals (some of which can only be seen in Africa); travel and tourism in South Africa also has in its wake, its shadow companion of crime.

Thus the paper offered by the authors Edwin Perry and Cheryl Potgieter is perhaps most apposite and baldly entitled '*Crime and Tourism in South Africa*'. The authors' starting point is the very real fear and trepidation over tourism and crime which as they point out, has emerged as a pressing global issue, gaining heightened exposure in both the media and political spaces. Their study gives voice to the (African!) 'elephant' in the room, the proverbial large 'something' that is smack in the middle of the room, rather obvious, but which no one wants to talk about. This is of course the reality that South Africa is often viewed as the crime capital of the world. This is of crucial import, especially for a special issue largely located in South(ern) Africa. Their paper is thus a vital inclusion and appropriately brings up the endnote to this special issue. They point out that while crime rates in specific types of crime may well (appear to) be decreasing or stabilising, there continues to be an alarming upward spiralling trend in many types of crimes. Examining issues pertaining to crime and tourism is critical since effective crime prevention and changing negative perceptions can contribute significantly to economic growth by promoting investments and tourism. They conclude by reiterating that crime remains an important consideration in relation to tourism within the South African spatial context, and requires an interdisciplinary and critical theoretical and methodological approach to examine the densely multiplexed economic, social, political and spatial aspects. Their paper brings up to the gaze the concomitant indexical security and safety social issues that cling to both (constructed) utopias as well as heterotopias.

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