

# Domesticating “Nonwestern” Tourists Cultural Contraflows in the Swiss Alps

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Euro-TEFI 2017

# Building our stories: *Co-creating tourism futures in research, practice and education*

Department of Culture & Global Studies  
Aalborg University, Denmark  
20-22 August 2017



Editors - Dianne Dredge & Szilvia Gyimóthy

## A MESSAGE FROM CONFERENCE ORGANISERS:

Dear fellow storytellers,

Welcome to the Euro-TEFI conference entitled “Building our stories”. We are very proud and happy to host and organize this regional TEFI event at Aalborg University’s Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture & Global Studies. We welcome about 45 storytellers representing 18 different countries ranging from Chile to France and from New Zealand to Serbia. We are thrilled to see that this conference brings researchers and practitioners from various cultural and professional backgrounds together, hence leading to an exchange of views and knowledge, which in turn hopefully creates positive impact to co-create caring tourism futures in diverse spaces and communities; streets, classrooms, institutions and enterprises. We see this event as a starting point for creating a knowledge network that reaches outside academia - embracing storyteller-activists, who share similar visions and ready to pool their forces to rethink and re-shape tourism. Besides discussing research work at the conference itself, we hope that many contributions make their way to edited volumes or special issues aligned with the theme of strategic, inspirational and compassionately disruptive storytelling.

Organizing such an international event requires joint efforts and support from various partners. It would have been impossible without the encouraging and constant support of all the members of our scientific board, the members of our scientific committee, the guest speakers, our session chairs and workshop organizers! Thank you! Furthermore, we would like to say thank you to our sponsor: the Obel Foundation and the Department of Culture and Global Studies. Finally, big cheers to all of you participating in this conference and sharing your stories! This is what brings such a conference to life. We are thrilled to explore the power of storytelling, narratives, tales and anecdotes during and outside the conference rooms in Wonderful Copenhagen in the coming days! Remember, the wise words of Hans Christian Andersen: *“Life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale.”*

*Dianne, Szilvia and Tina*

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## **PANEL SESSION**

### **From good intentions to action in social enterprise**

Monday 21st August 15:20 to 16:20

#### Panel Participants

My Ravn, Gadens Stemmer, Copenhagen

Sanne Stephansen, Rub & Stub, Copenhagen

Ulla Gawlik, Tikitut Community-based tourism, Gothenburg

Moderator: Kristina Nilsson Lindström, University of Gothenburg

While social enterprise could well be described as a global movement, application and uptake in the tourism sector has been relatively limited. Its potential to change, deepen and redirect efforts towards more sustainable and local forms of tourism is largely missing from the debate.

Tourism is not a cohesive sector, but rather, it is made up of different subsectors that all work separately and interdependently. These subsectors include food and hospitality services, guided tours and accommodation.

We are lucky to have three panellists in this session who represent different sectors that make a contribution to tourism. Our aim with this panel session is to explore social enterprise, its potential connection with tourism, and what we all might be able to do to facilitate social entrepreneurs as change agents in communities and destinations at large.

## PANEL SESSION

### Next Gen Leadership Forum

#### Panel Participants

Prof. Diana Parry, University of Waterloo, Canada (senior academic perspective)

Dr. Outi Rantala, Multi-dimensional tourism institute, University of Lapland  
(early/mid career perspective)

Dr. Martin Trandberg, Aalborg University, Denmark (early career perspective)

Moderator: Dianne Dredge, Aalborg University, Denmark

**Description:** Leadership in tourism education is distributed and dynamic. It requires agile, creative and reflexive thinkers, and a critical-activist orientation. In a fun, interactive and sometimes physical environment, this symposium involves theoretical explorations of leadership, stories from the field, and individual and collective strategy building. We will reflect upon how tourism studies as a field has developed, what were the characteristics and implications of past leadership practices, and what are the future challenges? In the process, we will identify what knowledge, skills and competences future leaders need, and what strategies, actions and support are needed to develop these leaders? It is incumbent upon all of us who believe in the potential of tourism education to facilitate ethical, inclusive, just and sustainable local livelihoods to engage in this debate and envision the future.

**Aims** (*these might be longer term, but worthwhile setting out as a challenge*):

- To increase awareness of leadership in higher education specifically in relation to tourism studies.
- To develop an agenda and set of actionable tasks at individual and collective levels.
- To nurture social capital amongst scholars in tourism and related disciplines.

**Concepts:** leadership, individual and collective agency, critical activism, academic capitals



## **PANEL SESSION**

### **Co-creating knowledge through stories of teaching and learning**

#### Panel participants

- Helene Clausen, Aalborg University
- Vibeke Andersson, Aalborg University
- Caryl Bosman, Griffith University

This session explores innovative ways in which students co-create and share knowledge with stakeholders in a destination. This panel session explores new ways of collaborating with students in the entire research process and how students can be involved in the co-production of knowledge, and in the creation of future teaching materials.

## **PANEL SESSION**

### **Forum: Lost and found in translation**

This panel session will unlock multilingual voices in the tourism academy. We will build upon recent TRINET debates about the importance of addressing the English language hegemony in tourism scholarship. We seek to better understand what types of knowledge are being excluded and marginalized, and how we might better recognize and celebrate this knowledge. In this session, we will hear the reflections on the challenges of being a non-English speaking tourism scholar in a global world and devise some actions to support those scholars who bring with them the richness of multilingual understanding about tourism.

#### **Panel Participants**

José-Carlos García-Rosell, Multidimensional Tourism Institute, University of Lapland

Ivana Volić, Educons University, Serbia

Minni Haanpää, Multidimensional Tourism Institute, University of Lapland

Catia Rebelo, Cardiff University

Moderator: Johan Edelheim

Building our stories:  
*Co-creating tourism futures in research*

## Keynote Speakers



## **KEYNOTE**

### **“Learning from social entrepreneurship stories”**

Jaan Aps

*Estonian Social Enterprise Network*

This keynote will use examples of (social) entrepreneurs to explore exciting possibilities of employing tourism as a tool for enabling positive societal changes. Jaan will give examples of mostly untapped potential of tourism initiatives to define and achieve ambitious impact objectives (besides providing basic services in a sustainable manner). He will also call for connecting country-specific stories into strong regional (or global) epic about the way the sustainable tourism industry could look like in the future.

As a chairman and co-founder, Jaan Aps leads one of the strongest social enterprise support organisations in Northern Europe. Jaan is a member of GECES, the European Commission’s Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship. In 2013, he was elected as ‘Mission person of the year’ by the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations for his long-term commitment to promoting societal impact analysis. His speaking engagements have included Canada, France, Italy and Turkey.

## KEYNOTE

### **“Breaking new grounds and building relationships: reflections from an urban community-based tourism initiative in the North”**

Kristina Nilsson Lindström  
*University of Gothenburg*

Ulla Gawlik  
*Tikitut Community-based Enterprise, Gothenburg, Sweden*

This keynote is a story. It is a story about a rewarding collaboration between an academic and a social entrepreneur and our respective networks. It is a story of a community-based tourism initiative in the boundaries between tourism and alienation in a segregated city and between tourism and the refugee ‘crisis’. It is a story of the challenges you face when trying to broaden the notion of tourism into a more inclusive concept and practice. But above all else, it is a story of capacity building, the joy of learning from the unexpected and a possible way forward for tourism in the face of post-industrialization with an increased demand for tourism as a legitimate strategy for inclusiveness, local empowerment and resilience.

*Kristina Nilsson Lindström* is currently involved in a 3-year research project focusing on stakeholder collaboration for sustainable tourism, specifically the issues of tourism and the environment and tourism and the sharing economy. In addition, Kristina is a governmental-appointed expert in a public inquiry concerning a future strategy for tourism in Sweden.

*Ulla Gawlik* is the inspiration, co-founder and project manager behind Tikitut, an innovative social enterprise in Gothenburg, Sweden. The aim of Tikitut is to provide community information for new residents in Sweden as well as for guests to the area. The goal is to create possibilities for local citizens to work as local guides for theme days etc. Ulla and Kristina will tell the story of their collaborations together in this presentation.

## KEYNOTE

### **“The Princess, the Dragon and the Magic Land of Tourism”**

Johan Edelheim, Professor

*The Norwegian School of Hotel Management, University of Stavanger  
Multidimensional Tourism Institute, University of Lapland*

The Magic Land of Tourism (or MLT for short) is magic indeed, it hosts billions of female and male heroes each year, it is considered to be a panacea for just about any ailments of society possible, and it grows without interruption, in good times, and in bad times, because it is such a wonderful combination of work and leisure, who could ever dislike it? Politicians love the MLT, they get to spend millions and billions of tax payers' money on exaggerating and promoting their view of reality, and they can never be wrong, as long as they continue pouring money into MLT they ensure that their electorates can bask in the warm glow that self-praise gives. But what kind of a Dragon exist in MLT? The Dragon is called Climate Change, and it makes everybody sad, because it increases in power each time MLT grows. Because the Dragon is so mean it is almost taboo to talk about it, like the bear of old time communities, saying its name brought bad luck, and most of us try to not engage with it. Finally, the Princess is naturally our one and only earth, living and breathing, plentiful and generous, trusting that the heroes out there will ultimately save her from the dragon.

When we take on careers in tourism academia, we are making a conscious choice: to study the MLT, to teach our students about it, and to serve communities by increasing knowledge about the MLT. Most community members believe that we work in marketing, it is common to be asked: ‘Well, how could we get more tourists to this area’? But what if our job is to train dragon slayers, what competencies do we need for that, and what will future tourism education look like?

*Johan Edelheim* has worked since the late 80s both in the tourism industries, and in vocational and higher education related to the industries in several European, and Asian countries, as well as for a decade in Australia. Behind most of Johan's research lies a deeply rooted aim for humanism and equality. Narratives have always been close to Johan's heart, and he considers that human awareness is arranged as a narrative. Johan's presentation can't be missed: "The Princess, the Dragon and the Magic Land of Tourism"!

## **KEYNOTE**

### **“Branding through People – Stories that Make a Difference”**

Birgitte Bergman

*VisitNordsjælland, Denmark*

Birgitte Bergman is Head of Marketing and Development at Visit Royal North Zealand and a passionate storyteller. In less than a decade of operations, the DMO facilitated a remarkable turnaround along the coastal leisure periphery of Copenhagen, implementing experience concepts along the Danish Riviera. Birgitte uses stories not only as a marketer, but as a strategic tool to mobilize, motivate and connect local actors. Birgitte will tell a story about developing signature concepts for Visit North Zealand, reviving the journey from ideation workshops, through local conflict solutions to implementation and market launch. Birgitte's presentation will leave you in no doubt about the power of storytelling.

## KEYNOTE

### **The art of impact: stories that make a difference**

Kenneth Mølbjerg Jørgensen

*Aalborg University, Denmark*

The keynote discusses stories as a concept for strategy and practice in development and change projects. Stories are presented as embodied performances that are historically, spatially and materially located. Stories are thus grounded in local circumstances, relationships and ways of living. They are inevitably tied up with the material and discursive possibilities that are embedded in the local setup for action. We discuss the implications for tourism and other kinds of regional development projects. In particular attention is drawn to the implications of stories in terms 1) creating the conditions for unique appearances, 2) how to connect the future with the past and present, and 3) how to create spaces of appearance from local and regional networks and connections between private and public stakeholders.

Kenneth Mølbjerg Jørgensen, Ph.D., is Professor MSO at The Department of Business and Management at Aalborg University in Denmark. He does research and teaches within the area of organizational change and organizational learning. His research interests include power, materiality, narrative, storytelling and ethics in organizations and in leadership education. Kenneth has authored, co-authored and edited numerous books, book chapters and journal articles. Kenneth has among others published books with CBS Press, Sage, and Nova Science Publishers, and published articles in *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *Business Ethics: A European Perspective*, *Philosophy of Management*, and *Advances in Human Resource Development*.



Building our stories:  
*Co-creating tourism futures in research*

## Full Paper Submissions



# Psychosocial stories: narrative and deep reflexivity in tourism research

*Émilie Crossley*, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

## Abstract

Critical tourism researchers' increasing focus on narrative, meaning and experience presents both epistemological and ethical challenges related to how we co-create and represent our participants' stories. Tourists participating in qualitative research may be encouraged to reveal intimate details of their lives, exposing their subjectivities while those of researchers remain concealed. While such methods undoubtedly generate data of great complexity and nuance, they also reveal potentially uneven power dynamics at the heart of the research encounter. I argue that qualitative approaches to narratives of lived experience in tourism research must be matched with an equally deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to engender a relation of care and equity towards research participants while also providing insights into the co-constructed nature of research stories (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005). Psychosocial studies provides a way of engaging with 'deep reflexivity' in order to go 'beyond the rather mechanistic operationalisation of reflexivity in qualitative social science in terms of the main, socially-given identities' (Hollway, 2004, p. 8). Deep reflexivity implies that researchers' reflexive practice should be extended to include embodied meanings that researchers, consciously or unconsciously, bring to their research (Birkeland, 2005). I illustrate deep reflexivity in practice by sharing my personal story of conducting psychosocial research in a volunteer tourism context and reflect on the challenges that this form of reflexivity presented in terms of ethics, professional integrity, and methodological accuracy. The paper concludes by arguing that psychosocial studies and the concept of deep reflexivity present a promising avenue for methodological advancement in critical tourism research and can contribute a fresh perspective on the co-construction of tourism stories.

## Introduction

Tourism studies have typically lagged behind other fields of social science when it comes to the issue of reflexivity (Cohen, 2012; Dupuis, 1999; Feighery, 2006; Hall, 2004; Hollinshead & Jamal, 2001; Westwood, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2006). While there has been considerable progress made in the last decade regarding the acceptance of using the first person in academic writing, the field still produces a significant body of qualitative research written from a position of supposed objectivity, detachment and disembodiment (Cohen, 2012). Westwood et al. (2006, p. 34) state that calls for greater reflexivity and personal authorship in tourism studies 'emanate from the progressive, post-modern fracturing of the naturalist, post-positivist tradition and acknowledge that it is the agency of the researcher as writer that makes the research'. This erosion of the assurances of post-positivism is aligned with the so-called 'crisis

of representation', a body of scholarship influenced in particular by feminist and post-structural writing that critiques the notion that academics can represent 'the object of their inquiry from an objective and value-free position' (Ateljevic et al., 2005, p. 11).

It is against this backdrop that Feighery (2006, p. 270-271) argues for recognition of the 'subject-centred nature of knowledge' and defines reflexivity as 'the act of making oneself the object of one's own observation, in an attempt to bring to the fore the assumptions embedded in one's perspectives and descriptions of the world.' However, Ateljevic et al. (2005, p. 10) caution against limiting our conception of reflexivity to mere introspection and instead articulate four forces and constraints in which tourism researchers are likely, and encouraged, to get 'entangled'. The authors divide these dimensions of reflexivity into two 'macro' and two 'micro' forces:

the 'ideologies and legitimacies' which govern and guide our tourism research outputs; the 'research accountability' environment which decides what is acceptable as tourism research; our 'positionality' as embodied researchers whose lives, experiences and worldviews impact on our studies, and our 'intersectionality with the 'researched'' as we carry out our research relationships with the people that we profess to study (Ateljevic et al. 2005, p. 10).

Macbeth (2001, p. 35) also offers two ways of categorizing the literature on reflexivity – positional reflexivity and textual reflexivity. Positional reflexivity is akin to Ateljevic et al.'s (2005) first micro dimension focusing on 'positionality' of the researchers, whereas textual reflexivity captures a more post-structural practice addressing textual representation and disruption. In this paper, it is these 'micro' dimensions of positionality and intersectionality that concern me primarily as ways of opening up discussion about the stories produced with and about participants in tourism research. I argue that these dimensions provide critical lenses through which to examine the co-constructed nature of qualitative tourism research.

While the concepts of positionality and intersectionality provide an opportunity for reflexivity to form a substantive part of qualitative analyses, researcher reflexivity is commonly only found in methods sections consisting of a rather perfunctory personal disclosure statement. Cohen (2012) describes how he has commonly only written himself into such 'safe spaces' in the text and that this 'has sometimes been no more than a sentence or two that divulges [his] own socio-cultural background and reasons for interest in the context'. Similarly, Hall (2004) reveals how in previous writing he has removed accounts of personal reflexivity, or relegated these accounts to forewords and afterwords rather than including them in the main body of the text, due to concerns about the 'appropriateness' of such material in an academic publication. It appears that reflexivity is a risky endeavor for researchers to

undertake, carrying the potential to undermine professional integrity by presenting work in an unorthodox fashion or by revealing information of a private nature in a professional forum. Pillow (2003, p. 192) contends that mainstream reflexivity in qualitative research risks stagnating into a set of practices that become complicit in reproducing the social structures and power relations that many researchers seek to challenge. What she advocates instead is ‘a reflexivity of discomfort’ that critically interrogates the histories and relationalities upon which research relationships are predicated.

I argue that qualitative tourism research, which often encourages participants to reveal intimate details of their subjectivity and experience, must be matched by an equally deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to rebalance research power dynamics while also providing insight into the co-constructed nature of research stories (Ateljevic et al., 2005). I suggest that three levels of positional/interactional researcher reflexivity can be identified: a reflexive disclosure statement typically found in methodology sections as described by Cohen (2012) and Hall (2004); ongoing conscious reflexive practice woven through the entirety of a research text and analysis as exemplified by Ateljevic et al. (2005); and ‘deep reflexivity’ that builds on the previous level through the inclusion of embodied, affective and unconscious meanings that researchers bring to the research context as advocated by Hollway (2004). In the following section, I turn to psychosocial theory in an attempt to explore its potential for developing a form of ‘deep reflexivity’ in tourism research.

### **Psychosocial studies and reflexivity**

The recent emergence of what has come to be known as ‘psychosocial studies’ (Frosh, 2003) reflects a growing insistence within the social sciences upon theorising subjectivity in ways that privilege neither its social nor psychological dimensions. Psychosocial studies can be conceptualised as a theoretically and methodologically plural field aiming to articulate ‘a place of “suture” between elements whose contribution to the production of the human subject is normally theorised separately’ (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, p. 348). Examples of such pervasive theoretical dualisms include individual/society, psyche/social, structure/agency and body/mind. Psychosocial researchers claim that mainstream psychology disavows forms of intersubjectivity and relationality that bind subjects socially, producing a reductive and ideologically distorted theorisation of the subject (Blackman, Cromby, Hook, Papadopoulos, & Walkerdine, 2008; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1998). Psychosocial studies places a strong empirical emphasis upon lived experience and personal narratives, and

has been typified by the use of in-depth qualitative interviews to generate data (Walkerdine, 2008). Psychoanalysis is frequently used in psychosocial research to enhance discursive readings of narratives due to its capacity to theorise extra-discursive aspects of subjectivity and the complexity of personal, emotional, intersubjective worlds. In this context, psychoanalysis has been utilised as a strategy for ‘enriching’ and ‘thickening’ discursive interpretations of such narratives, allowing researchers to look for conscious and unconscious ‘reasons’ behind subjects’ investments in particular subject positions (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008).

Hollway (2004, p. 8) argues that working with forms of deep reflection in psychosocial research constitutes a type of ‘deep reflexivity’ that provides the researcher with ways of going ‘beyond the rather mechanistic operationalisation of reflexivity in qualitative social science in terms of the main, socially-given identities’. This echoes Frosh & Saville Young’s (2008, p. 113) concerns that reflexivity in qualitative research is too often treated as ‘a relatively simple, technical matter, perhaps an issue of confession or self-revelation’, as described in Cohen (2012) and Hall’s (2004) reflexive disclosure statements. Saville Young (2011, p. 48) suggests that from a psychosocial perspective, reflexivity should be conceptualized as ‘more than simply describing researchers’ investment in their work, rather the interview is understood as developing out of a context in which the dynamic relationship between the researched and researcher co-constructs the unfolding narrative’. Beyond analysis of interview dynamics, Saville Young (2011, p. 48) also recommends other means of ‘exploring unconscious processes that arise in the research encounter through the use of introspection, interpretation of fantasies and even dream analysis’.

Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody (2001, p. 97) suggest that a psychoanalytically informed reflexive practice allows researchers to pose the following salient questions: ‘to which part or parts of me is the subject speaking? Which part of me is responding? In other words, who do I represent for the subject, and who do they represent for me?’ What Walkerdine et al. are alluding to is the unconscious traffic between psychoanalyst and analysand known as ‘transference’ and ‘countertransference’. Conventionally, transference refers to the projection of the analysand’s unconscious desires onto the analyst, and to the ways in which analysands relate to the analyst as a significant other from their childhoods (Giami, 2001). The countertransference is thus the response of the analyst to this transference, and can be defined in the research context as ‘the sum of unconscious and emotional reactions, including anxiety, affecting his/her relation with the observed subject and situation’ (Giami, 2001, p. 6). These transference and countertransference dynamics result in a theorization of

temporally complex encounters in which the ‘past and present of both participants, as well as their mutual reactions to past and present, fuse into a unique emotional position involving both of them’ (Kernberg, 1965, cited in Giarni, 2001, p. 4).

Whether it is possible to identify transference and countertransference in research interviews is a contentious issue that raises questions about the transposition of psychoanalysis from its clinical parameters and about the mechanisation of psychoanalytic concepts (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Hook, 2008; Kvale, 1999). Frosh and Saville Young (2008, p. 113) warn that discussions of ‘the countertransference’ in social research can look ‘only schematically like the intense exploration of unconscious material characteristic of psychoanalytic reflection on the countertransference in the clinical situation’. However, Cartwright (2004, p. 223) in his work on the psychoanalytic interview method argues that ‘inchoate transference-countertransference impressions’ can be present within research interviews. These impressions may enable the researcher to become attuned and affectively receptive to their interviewee so that they can proceed with greater sensitivity and responsiveness (Jervis, 2009). Indeed, Clarke (2002) emphasises the ‘communicative and constructive’ aspects of transferences through the term ‘projective communication’. Therefore, ‘researchers who pay attention to what is going on inside them ... may discover that a respondent has communicated something of how they feel without actually verbalizing it’ (Jervis, 2009, p. 148).

## **Methodology**

This paper is based on research undertaken as part of a qualitative, longitudinal study of volunteer tourist subjectivity. This involved conducting repeated semi-structured interviews with ten young volunteer tourists over the course of one year. The volunteer tourists were all British, white, mainly middle-class and aged between 18–24 years. Participants were recruited with the aid of a large UK based commercial provider offering medium-term community development and wildlife conservation programmes of between one to three months’ duration in Kenya. The purpose of the research was to develop a more nuanced, complex understanding of how volunteer tourists’ identities and experiences fluctuate and are actively negotiated over time and space, particularly in relation to issues of ethical consumerism and socio-economic development. As part of the research, I joined the volunteer tourist group for one month’s participant observation in Kenya. By putting myself in the position of my participants I hoped to gain a more detailed, first-hand appreciation of what volunteer tourism involves and gather supplementary data by observing activities, interactions and conversations that might not be

mentioned in the interviews. Birkeland's (2005, p. 17) account of her positioning as a 'reflexive tourist' in the North Cape in Norway has been influential in this respect. Like Birkeland, I too wanted to explore the preoccupations and taken-for-granted meanings that I brought to the research by sharing my participants' experiences and reflecting on how this made me feel.

In Kenya, I maintained a daily reflexive field diary that captured not only the interactions and activities of the volunteer tourists but also gave an account of my most intimate thoughts and emotions during the fieldwork in order to engender greater reflexivity (Coffey, 1999; Delamont, 2004). Drawing on literature dealing with the psychodynamic aspects of fieldwork (Hunt, 1989; Brody, 1981), I also decided to include any dreams, parapraxes or fantasies that I experienced in the field diary in order to deepen my reflexive practice. Hunt (1989, p. 26) argues that the encounter between researcher and participants should be read as 'a script which contains a latent psychological as well as a manifest cultural content' and that this psychological content, such as affects and transferences can impede empathic understanding and communication if not exposed and interpreted. I used data from my reflexive field diary to comment on volunteer tourist practices that were either not mentioned in the interviews or did not feature substantially in them, to enhance my reading of the interview data by linking my participants' narratives to the practices I had witnessed, and to enable a reflexive account of how the data were produced and interpreted through my own subjectivity.

### **Deep reflexivity in action: tourist photography**

The move towards a form of 'deep reflexivity' can be illustrated by sharing a personal story of conducting psychosocial research in a volunteer tourism context. In this section, I briefly explore field notes, an interview excerpt, a dream, and a photograph as a way of accessing the conscious and unconscious meanings that I brought to my research. This allows me to probe how these meanings and experiences framed the research, contributed to the interactional dynamics between myself and the research participants, and fed productively into the analytic process.

I chose to study tourism partly due to a fascination arising from my own extensive travels and, most probably, my identity as a dual-national and cosmopolitan. Despite the fact that the research was framed as an exploration of volunteer tourism as a form of 'alternative' tourism, during my fieldwork in Kenya I became interested in a highly 'mainstream' aspect of the volunteer tourists' actions involving their use of photography. A recurring feature of the

photography that I observed was the failure to ask people's permission before taking their picture, despite having been advised to do so by the volunteer tourism company. On one occasion, during a walk through a village, a woman in traditional dress appeared from behind a house, an infant in her arms and a second child standing shyly by her side. One of my participants, Kate, went up to the woman and, without addressing her, took a photograph. Moments later, another participant approached the woman and asked whether she could take a picture, at which the woman shook her head, raised her hand and said 'no'. Kate laughed nervously and said 'Oh well, too late!' Similar scenes of assumed consent were played out regularly in other settings and I developed fairly strong feelings of resentment towards the volunteer tourist group for what I perceived as objectifying, disrespectful behavior towards members of the visited communities.

One particularly memorable moment in Kenya that enabled me to reflect further on the volunteer tourists' photographic practices was a cultural excursion to a Maasai village. We each had to pay a small fee to enter the village, after which the Maasai sang, danced, demonstrated traditional skills, sold beaded handicrafts and posed for photographs. Having to pay made some of the volunteer tourists feel uncomfortable and led to an element of scepticism with several questioning the authenticity of the village. I remember feeling a strange mix of reserve and excitement at the prospect of photographing the tribe members dressed in their traditional clothes. Importantly, I also experienced a sense of entitlement due to having paid to be in their company and this commodified relation effectively meant that we could not be refused pictures. As we arrived, the villagers took our hands and led us off quite forcefully to pose for photographs. Despite really enjoying this visit at the time, that night I had a disturbing dream that seemed to evoke the imagery of the village together with feelings of anxiety and fear of which I had not previously been aware. I recorded what I could remember of the dream the following morning in my reflexive field diary:

*I came across a group of men and women on the grassy outskirts of a town who were standing amongst a multitude of tethered snakes. There were snakes of every type and colour imaginable, and I worried that many could possess a lethal bite. The people wouldn't let me leave, saying that I had to have my picture taken with the snakes. I was afraid. ... I finally managed to get away by promising that I would return the following day with another twenty people and that we would all pay to be photographed with the snakes.*

After thinking about possible interpretations for the dream, I concluded that the snakes most likely represented the Maasai – their colourful skins evoking the brightly coloured



clothes of the Maasai and the elongated way that the men appeared as they performed the *Adumu* (a traditional jumping dance). Being under pressure to have my photograph taken with these creatures, the obligation to pay, and the large number of people that I promised to bring were clearly references to the commodified relation that had been established between the Maasai and the volunteer tourists. The snakes being ‘tethered’ symbolized the oppressive, objectifying effects of this commodified relation. This dream drew attention to a fantasy relation in which the local people were beckoning us to go and enjoy their authenticity, papering over a far more traumatic realisation of the exploitative practice we were participating in and enjoying.

The photograph below shows me posing with two members of the Maasai tribe. Unlike many of the other photographs that I have from the visit, in which it was the Maasai who had encouraged us to pose for pictures, this is one that I requested. The main focus of my attention was the man standing to the left, who seemed more authentically dressed, adorned with traditional white beads, red cloth and face paint, and who had been telling us that he would have to slay a lion as part of his coming of age ritual. The result is an awkward picture in which I am leaning closely into the aesthetically authentic man, holding the souvenirs that I bought from him, with another, more modestly dressed man standing at more of a distance. The first man and I look directly at the camera. The second man observes us and almost blends into the background with his darker robes and oblique gaze; yet at the same time he seems to destabilise the image. What I think this photograph illustrates is, first, the nature of my desire to see and bring back home symbols of African authenticity and, secondly, the potential symbolic violence contained in the act of tourist photography. I had simultaneously objectified one man through a neo-colonial indulgence in his appearance and excluded another for his lack of conformity to my preconceptions. Today this image is hard for me to look at as it arouses strong feelings of shame.



**Figure 1.** Me posing with two members of the Maasai tribe. *Source:* Author.

During a series of post-trip photo-elicitations using the volunteer tourists' own images, I asked my participants to reflect on how and why they had taken particular photographs in Kenya. I posed the question of whether there was anything that they did not want to or felt they could not take pictures of, and the almost unanimous response was 'no' as exemplified by the following quotation:

*Sarah:* There was nothing that you couldn't take photos of 'cause if you didn't they'd be like "take photos! take photos!" Wouldn't they? [Émilie: Yeah] And they loved cameras and stuff like that so there was nothing really that (.) you kinda think oh I can't take pictures of that. Because I didn't take any pictures until (.) they were all like "take pictures! take pictures!" And they did it every single place you went. They all wanted you to take pictures, so no. There's nothing that really, that I was like oh I can't take a picture of that because if I didn't they'd ask me to. 'Cause they all wanted their picture taken.

Sarah emphatically constructs her photography as invited or coerced by the local Kenyans and as a way of fulfilling *their* desire to be photographed rather than *her* desire to take pictures. At the time of this interview, I experienced familiar feelings of judgment towards Sarah's attitude and annoyance at what I perceived as over-zealousness and over-simplification of complex 'host-guest' dynamics, despite the fact that what she was reporting was demonstrably true, at least to some extent. For example, I too had been led off forcefully at the Maasai village to

have my picture taken with members of the tribe but Sarah's narrative seemed to omit examples such as the incident with Kate in which local Kenyans refused to be photographed or were visibly unhappy with the volunteer tourists' behaviour. However, reflecting on the dream and photograph associated with the excursion to the Maasai village allowed me to unpack these emotions arising in relation to this interview, helping me to realize that my hostility may have been a defensive response to my own complicity with some of the photographic practices that took place in Kenya. This knowledge that we had shared common desires and experiences as tourists in turn enabled me to develop more of an empathic relation to my participants.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper I have argued that qualitative approaches to narratives of lived experience in tourism research must be matched with an equally deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to engender a relation of equity towards research participants while also providing insights into the co-constructed nature of research stories. I shared a personal research story in an attempt to demonstrate how psychosocial studies, with its focus on the conscious and unconscious meanings brought into research contexts, can provide a productive avenue for exploring the concept of 'deep reflexivity' (Hollway, 2004; Saville Young, 2011; Birkeland, 2005). This form of reflexivity goes beyond more common reflexive disclosure statements typically written into 'safe spaces' in the text such as methodologies (Cohen, 2012; Hall, 2004) and demonstrates the complexity of what Ateljevic et al. (2005) mean when they encourage researchers to get 'entangled'. This approach enabled me to reflect on how my own subjectivity as a tourist and my complicity in the potentially detrimental photographic practices produced unconscious defensive responses that may have impacted on interactions with my research participants. In this way, my reflexive practice directly contributed to and enriched the analytic process. In conclusion, deep reflexivity presents an opportunity for methodological advancement in critical tourism research and can contribute a fresh perspective on the co-construction of tourism stories.

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# Doing PBL in tourism education: a student perspective

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## Abstract

Problem-based learning (PBL) dates back to the 1970s and is inspired by the 1970s' collectivistic and practice-oriented learning ideals and emphasizes dynamic learning processes without clear-cut beginnings or ends. Today, PBL is often performed and framed by other discourses, strategies, rules, regulations and politics than those governing universities in the 1970s. The purpose of this paper is **not** to account for changes in university policies and framings or explore the hinterlands of PBL, but simply to give voice to today's tourism students and explore their enactments of contemporary PBL. The study is based on qualitative data obtained from 62 students that emphasize smaller adjustments, improvements and minor revisions of their work-in-progress far more than radical (re)explorations and redirection of their work. Such incrementalism implies other rationales than the fundamental ideas behind PBL, and the paper therefore discusses the dilemmas students experience when doing PBL within a contemporary university setting.

## Introduction

Problem-based learning (PBL) is inspired by Popper's (1994) idea that life pertains to problem-solving and is replete with opportunities for both learning and improving competencies, skills, knowledge and understanding of problem solving. PBL has become popular across a variety of disciplines in higher education (e.g. Barrows, 2000; Dochy et al., 2003; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Williams and Hmelo, 1998) and has inspired universities to let students work with messy and complex problems before they master content in order for learning to focus on the solving of ambiguous, multi-faceted, ill-structured and context-dependent problems with multiple or unknown solutions and viable approaches.

PBL both changes the roles of the students (i.e. making students pro-active and processes collaborative, student-centered, self-directed, self-assessing and self-reflective) and the role of the teacher (or tutor) from that of a knowledge disseminator to that of a facilitator. Wilkerson and Hundert (1998) argue that PBL tutors should act as information disseminators, evaluators, parents, professional consultants, confidants, learners and mediators. At the same time, several researchers point to student anxiety, discomfort and role uncertainty being particularly prominent in PBL settings (e.g. Lieux, 2001; Schultz-Ross & Kline, 1999; Jost et

al., 1997; Woods, 1996). As a result, dyads comprised of students doing problem-based project work and tutors (or supervisors) that work with this group of students might be characterized by tensions, misunderstandings, role ambiguities, uncertainties, incompatible expectations, discomfort and/or disappointment.

Giving voice to students and seeing PBL student-supervisor dyads from a student perspective, the purpose of this paper is to advance knowledge and understanding of today's students' enactments of PBL. The paper does not debate whether students' enactments are 'correct', but instead tries to deepen and broaden knowledge on how students 'see' PBL and their dyadic relationships with supervisors. In doing so, we give voice to a sample of students that are enrolled in a program at the master of arts level at Aalborg University in Denmark, a university dedicated to problem-based project work. As the call for the Euro-TEFI 2017 conference states, a key challenge is to create educational/learning spaces that empower engaged scholarship not only for researchers, but also for students. Furthermore, the call states storytelling to be a powerful way of exploring the values underpinning scholarship and praxis, and this paper presents students' stories about PBL and the spaces of knowledge sharing that PBL creates. In doing so, the paper emphasizes spaces and places of learning and knowledge co-creation as enacted by students.

### **Problem-based project work at Aalborg University**

The approach to problem-based learning (PBL) that characterizes studies at Aalborg University is a combination of a problem-based and a project-organized approach. As a result, students are strongly encouraged to work together in groups when doing projects and almost all students do their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semester projects in groups, almost all do their 9<sup>th</sup> semester projects alone (due to this semester being an internship semester), and although some students do their master's thesis in groups (usually in pairs) the vast majority of students choose to do the master's thesis alone. As a result, when students graduate from the program, most of them have tried to do problem-based project work both alone and in groups.

PBL project work at Aalborg University is defined with reference to scholars such as Piaget (1974), Lewin (1948), Vygotsky (1978), Dewey (1933), Kolb (1984) and Lave and Wenger (1991). At the core of problem-based and project-organized learning at AAU is the academic problem, which is both the starting point for learning processes and that which learning is organized around. Learning processes are furthermore defined as participant

directed (i.e. student centered, self-directed) learning and students are expected to take ownership of both their learning processes and the formulation of the problem.

In practice, students spend more than half their time doing project work. Both the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> semester have a specific theme that is taught during more traditional lectures and subsequent project work is guided by these semester themes. The 9<sup>th</sup> semester is laid out as an internship semester where half of the students' time is dedicated to working with and for a relevant organization and the other half is dedicated to project work in the form of an internship report. The entire 10<sup>th</sup> semester is dedicated to the master's thesis, which means full-time dedication to project work.

Before students start their projects, a supervisor is assigned. Supervisors typically get 10 hours per student for supervision at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semester and 22 hours per master's thesis student. This number of hours includes all activities supervisors engage in, including preparation for meetings, written feedback, email correspondence, meetings with students and exam activities. During project work the supervisor's role is that of an advisor or facilitator whereas students are held responsible for both their own learning and the results (Barge, 2010; AAU PBL Academy, 2015). Boegelund (2015) defines the roles of the supervisor as a professional sparring partner, project leader and all-round facilitator, whereas Tofteskov (1996) points to four types of supervisor roles in the form of process-supervisors, product-supervisors, control-supervisors and laissez-faire supervisors. In particular, AAU supervisors act as facilitators of problem analysis, problem solving and self-directed learning critically encouraging reflexive learning (Boegelund & Dahl, 2015).

### **Contemporary framing of PBL at AAU**

Today, PBL is performed in a setting governed by other discourses, strategies, rules, regulations and politics than those governing universities in the 1970s where PBL was introduced at AAU. In particular and subsequently discussed, contemporary student activities are framed by and subscribe to *result-oriented* terminologies stemming from grading scales, ministerial orders and internal curricula guidelines and principles.

In 2007, a new grading scale was introduced in Denmark. On the 'old' grading scale, the second highest grade was given for the *remarkable* and *independent* performance, and the highest grade was given for the *exceptionally remarkable* and *independent* performance (<http://ufm.dk/uddannelse-og-institutioner>). Although the highest grade was only given in exceptional cases, discursively, this grade set a standard for academic performances where the



highest grade symbolized performances beyond ‘expectable’, hereby encouraging students to see their own performances as having ‘no upper limit’. In 2007, a new grading scale was implemented. The new grading scale introduced by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science in Denmark differs fundamentally from the old grading scale as it introduced grading based on identifying weaknesses and then reducing the grade on the basis of the amount and severity of weaknesses identified in comparison to an imagined errorless performance which would give a perfect score. Using this grading scale, the highest grade is given for an excellent performance displaying a high level of command of all aspects of the relevant material with *no or only a few minor* weaknesses (<http://ufm.dk/en/education-and-institutions>). The discourse set by this new grading scale is one of ‘meeting expectations’ and deducting weaknesses from a ‘perfect’ performance displaying no or few weaknesses, hereby making the university (and consequently supervisors) responsible for defining and communicating to students what a ‘*perfect*’ performance is. This discourse distinctly differs from the old grading scale where the highest grade symbolized *independent* performances beyond ‘*expectable*’ performances.

The master’s program in tourism at AAU is structured by a curriculum ([http://www.fak.hum.aau.dk/digitalAssets/91/91242\\_ka\\_turisme\\_eng\\_version\\_2014.pdf](http://www.fak.hum.aau.dk/digitalAssets/91/91242_ka_turisme_eng_version_2014.pdf)) and it is defined as two years (four semesters) of study equivalent to 120 ECTS points. Furthermore, the program structure is defined by modules which should each “*provide the student with an entity of disciplinary qualifications within a stipulated time frame stated in ECTS points*” (ibid.). As an example, the curriculum defines the master’s thesis as a module located at the 10<sup>th</sup> semester and equivalent to 30 ECTS. University politics and regulations have, in recent years, increasingly pointed supervisors towards calculating students’ workload as working hours, using 27-28 working hours per ECTS point as the official calculator for translating ECTS points to workload (e.g. a master’s thesis being equivalent to 810-840 working hours).

Furthermore, and in accordance with the European Qualification Framework, the curriculum lists learning outcomes as *knowledge, skills and competences* that students are expected to have “at the end” of a learning process. As an example, in a master’s thesis in tourism students should, among other things, demonstrate **knowledge and understanding** of the theoretical and methodical discipline(s) of the selected subject, and demonstrate reflection on this/these on a scientific basis; **skills** in independently seeking, analyzing and applying knowledge within tourism, on the basis of and with respect for scientific theory and method, substantiating disciplinary choices and priorities; and **competencies** in outlining options of solutions.

Although the criteria listed in the curriculum could potentially be used to evaluate students' learning *processes*, this is not the case. For example, at the end of the process, the student hand in their master's thesis and it is discussed at an oral examination with both the supervisor and an external advisor, who has no knowledge of the student's learning processes apart from what is included in the written thesis and the oral discussion. In practice, this means that the grading is based on assessment of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies students demonstrate at the *end* of the thesis process, representing a result-oriented terminology and an emphasis on, not the educational journey during the thesis process, but the written thesis and the oral examination as the learning destination.

Finally, all Danish universities are imbedded in a political landscape that rewards students' rapid entrance into the educational system and rewards universities for students graduating as quickly as possible. As a result, if students do not pass their thesis at the set exam, the university is retaliated by *not* receiving the 'completion bonus' they get when students finish their master's program within two years. This puts additional pressure on the system and urges students to rush the process and not dwell too much on individual parts of the learning process.

## **Methodology**

One thing is how universities and supervisors define PBL and much has been written from the perspective of those teaching it, but lesser research deals with the student perspective, and how students enact PBL. In order to give voice to students, our study employs a qualitative methodology and a qualitative research design containing several stages.

The first stage was exploratory and consisted in directly contacting graduates through social media (private messages sent by a senior lecturer, whom these students had 'befriended' on Facebook after they had graduated). The results from this part of the study are by no means representative, nor are they meant to be, as they simply present the reflections and thoughts on supervision of students, who have in common that they had this lecturer as their supervisor at some point in their years of study, which probably affected their responses. However, these students did give the authors initial insights into the type of issues that might be voiced by students. 24 responses were received as either emails or private messages. Apart from one message containing 44 words, all other responses were between 128 and 657 words long; with an average length of 344 words. One thing that characterizes these 24 responses is that they point to understandings of supervision in the form of highly dyadic relationships that include

students (and their competence levels, personalities, preferences etc.), the unique relationship between a supervisor and students (whether a group or an individual student) and supervisors (and their competencies, personalities, preferences etc.). In order to move beyond the potentially ‘rosy’ (and retrospective) picture of supervision painted by the first 24 study participants, during the next stage of the research process, 45 students that had just entered the master’s program were asked to answer an anonymous single question questionnaire (asking about their expectations towards PBL and supervision). Unfortunately, only 18 responses were received (a response rate of 40%). As a third and last step in the research process, a 10<sup>th</sup> semester student was employed to do interviews with 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> semester students. Nine interviews with 8<sup>th</sup> semester students and 13 interviews with 10<sup>th</sup> semester students were conducted during spring and summer 2016, and in total, the research includes data from 64 students.

## **Findings**

Giving voice to tourism students, the purpose of our qualitative study is to explore students’ enactments of contemporary PBL and this section presents one critical theme, *guiding*, which emerged during the very first interviews and matured as the 64 students advanced our understanding of students’ perspectives. The following three statements on what supervision should be introduce the content of this overarching theme:

*“To guide: the supervisor must guide. Meaning: when the student is confused, can't get hold of the project and so on, the supervisor must have the ability to guide the student in the right direction.”*

*“Guidance in how to approach a project and ways to improve my research.”*

*“I expect a supervisor that leads us to the right path, not with clues and riddles, but with straight forward warnings.”*

As exemplified by these quotes, the words ‘guide’ and ‘guidance’ as well as ‘right’ were central to how students define supervision. These words are not value-free as they point towards enactments of project work as having a set destination and supervisors as guides that will show students in the ‘right’ direction in order to arrive at that destination. The supervisor

hereby becomes a guide, who assists students' journeys through unfamiliar territory by giving directions that ensure that students arrive at 'the' destination. The down-side of defining supervisors as guides is the risk of forcing (or in the students' words, 'pushing') students to take certain paths, while avoiding others as they move in certain, 'right' directions.

Whereas Wilkerson and Hundert (1998) listed the roles of PBL tutors as information disseminator, evaluator, parent, professional consultant, confidant, learner and mediator, the students' discourse is very much one of guiding. In PBL project work, the role of the supervisor is sometimes cast as the role the Cat in the story of Alice in Wonderland takes on, when Alice meets him in the forest and asks him, which way she should go and he, instead of taking on the role as a guide, asks her where she is going (Carroll, 1865). When she answers that she does not know where she is going, his reply is that then it does not matter which way she goes (Carroll, 1865). Although the Cat in this situation may qualify as a caricature of a laissez fair supervisor that gives not only the least possible (or close to no) guidance, this scene from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland does point to the schism between helping students move forward and 'shuffling' them in 'the' right direction. Student enactments of supervision as showing 'the' way become even more profound when students include grading in their lines of reasoning. As an example, one student voiced his/her thoughts on linkages between supervision and grading as follows:

*"I would expect my supervisor to point out some main facts that I should reinforce for having a good project aiming for the best grade."*

As another example, a student pointed out that supervisors should:

*"Make comments clear and understandable [...] make clear, which comments are essential for the quality of the project and which are just 'fine tuning'"*.

What these two comments have in common is a *product-oriented discourse of improvement*, i.e. that supervision is, first and foremost, about improving what students have already 'produced', not to be a confidant or fellow traveler on the students' academic journey down hazardous roads, back alleys, dead ends, inevitable U-turns or trips in the wrong direction down one-way streets. One student elaborates on this issue by pointing to 'good' supervision as follows:

*“A good supervisor critiques. Because constructive critique or critical feedback [...], suggestions on what could be done better and giving one or two examples how it could be done better. In my point of view, critique is the way to improvement ...”*

Furthermore, another student points to the rationality behind supervision being as follows:

*“The reason why you get a supervisor is because you don’t know a whole lot and they know a lot, and if you get a really good supervisor that is able to, you know, really understand your topic, they have better ideas than you do, let’s just face it ...”*

All in all, we label students’ product- and improvement oriented discourse, emphasizing smaller adjustments, improvements and minor revisions of work-in-progress *incrementalism* in order to illuminate the restrictiveness of this discourse. Lindbloom (1959) introduced the idea of incrementalism as a practice having both merits and negative side-effects. As for the merits of incrementalism, apart from it enabling ‘muddling’ through, it also reduces complexities, uncertainties and alternative courses of action to something that is manageable and doable. Coping with PBL in contemporary university settings, it makes much sense that students think in terms of incrementalism in order to comply with the result-oriented framing of their work. However, Lindbloom (1959) also pointed to incrementalism as encouraging focusing on non-innovative alternatives and ‘smallness of change’, restriction of number of alternatives, sequential consideration of alternatives, dependency of ends and means (i.e. that choices of ends (such as ‘top grades’) and means (such as formulation of problems, application of theory or choice of methods) are mutually dependent). PBL work subjected to incrementalism thus becomes more about smaller and doable changes than about radical (re)explorations and redirection of project work. Although there is absolutely nothing ‘wrong’ with incrementalism per se, it does question some of the fundamental ideas behind PBL (i.e. learning cycles dedicated to exploration of ambiguous and context-dependent problems and double-loop learning).

## **Conclusion**

Contemporary framing of PBL at AAU (e.g. the grading scale, the ‘counting’ of ECTS points and student working hours and the explication of learning outcomes as ‘the end’ in curricula) fosters result-oriented discourses and terminologies. As a consequence, PBL project work is

framed as work that should be done within specific numbers of student and supervisor working hours and within a certain set of expectations (explicated as knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies), more than as creative, context-dependent, problem-directed, unstructured and ‘messy’ processes. Furthermore, student work is assessed on the basis of weaknesses according to a set ideal by a set deadline. If the students do not ‘deliver’, both the students and the university are subject to retaliatory actions. Considering all of these issues, it is not a big surprise that the students’ enactments and discourses are result-oriented and de-prioritize learning as processes characterized by ambiguity, contextuality, experimentation, U-turns and double-loop learning.

However, at its core, PBL emphasizes identification, analysis, (re)definition and delimitation of an ambiguous, multi-faceted and context-dependent problem with multiple solutions and viable approaches, including experimentation and U-turns. Therefore, it seems that contemporary framing of learning does not leave much room for accrediting students for the procedural and experimental aspects of PBL project work. This may mean that the PBL pedagogy is under pressure from an educational system and a political framing that increasingly emphasize end results and outcomes. Although students may not be aware of these tensions, our data shows that students respond to, and try to navigate as effectively as possible within, the framing of learning set by the university and the way students do this is by turning to incrementalism in PBL project work, emphasizing supervision as smaller adjustments, improvements and minor revisions of their work-in-progress.

Several researchers have pointed to student anxiety, discomfort and role uncertainty being particularly prominent in PBL settings (e.g. Lieux, 2001; Schultz-Ross & Kline, 1999; Jost et al., 1997; Woods, 1996). Our study adds to these findings by pointing to incrementalism as a coping strategy for students. However, as incrementalism does not concord with the fundamental rationality of PBL, students may expect more guidance from supervisors than what is originally intended in a PBL context, and as a result, student-supervisor dyads might be characterized by tensions, misunderstandings, role ambiguities, incompatible expectations, discomfort and/or disappointment when students and supervisors have to define their respective roles and responsibilities. Cohen (1985) pointed to the two origins of the role(s) of the modern (tourist) guide. One of the origins is that of the guide as a path finder that leads or shows *the way*, especially to travelers in an unknown territory. The other origin is much more complex as it encompasses the role as a mentor/mediator/culture broker and points to the guide as one who *directs a person in his ways or conduct*. The role as a guide in the form of a path finder and leader resonates well with the incrementalism that the

students voice in our study. However, the role as a guide that direct students during students' own allegorical journey towards academic insights and enlightenment in many ways collide with incrementalism. As Cohen (1985, p. 5) argues the two roles of the guide (whether it is a tourist guide or an academic supervisor, we add) “*do not necessarily merge harmoniously, rather there exist incongruences and tensions ...*” Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to suggest which rationales and roles should direct PBL work in contemporary university settings, we hope that our findings inspire further research. Particularly, how, more precisely, the result-oriented rationales we increasingly subject our students to influence not only students ways of ‘being in’ our universities and ‘becoming’ pracademics, would be relevant to address. Addressing how students *see, enact* and *inhabit* the spaces and places of learning and knowledge co-creation that we ask them to join would be a suggested focal point.

Consequently, the central contribution of this paper is to question contemporary framings of PBL pedagogy. Traditionally, PBL was seen as a way to inspire students to engage in certain learning processes. These learning processes have lots in common with Alice’s experiences and her knowing who she was, when she got up ‘this morning’, but her having a feeling that she has changed several times since then (Carroll, 1865). However, the learning environments that students have to navigate within is result-oriented and much more resembles the King’s rationale when he recommends that the White Rabbit should begin at the beginning and stop when he comes to the end (Carroll, 1865). For the students given voice in this paper, this end is reached within a certain deadline, with a scope clearly communicated by the curriculum and the supervisor, and with a strong focus on minimizing identifiable and ‘fixable’ weaknesses. As a result, students’ turning towards incrementalism and hereby seeing the supervisor as one who shows ‘the way’ resonates well with the learning environment set by the university and the current political landscape, but it also makes PBL project work differ fundamentally from the academic journey initially intended.

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# **Whose story is told, whose agenda is met?**

## **Interrogating critical collaborative tourism research**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is an exploratory examination of the problematic nature of collaborating with the “cultural Other” in projects of academic activism that critically examines the concept of co-creative research by outlining coping, nurturing, disrupting landscapes of power, both in theory and in practice. This paper is written by two researchers who occupy positions of white privilege in the tourism academy but who have for decades sought to develop collaborative research and teaching projects that are committed to positive transformative change with communities, organisations and individuals that are suffering disempowerment or difficulty. Using vignettes, our goal is to illustrate our experiences of participative research in dangerous times by elaborating conceptual, methodological and ethical aspects of co-created research in which the “us” contains possibilities for change-making, empowerment and activism in tourism research.

### **Introduction**

Critical collaborative co-creative research can nurture, disrupt, transform, empower, shut down, solve or identify paths for others and in so doing, allow for co-created futures that are dynamic, non-dominating and open to difference.

The academy has been challenged by voices of the “subaltern” arguably since Edward Said exposed orientalism and its impacts (Said, 1978). Yet the tourism academy lags behind these advanced developments found in other disciplines such as cultural studies, feminism, geography and international relations.

The positioning of white, privileged academics as research collaborators for societal good and transformative change has become more problematic as the tourism academy is joined by scholars who occupy the spaces of “cultural others” and assert their right to speak; and in doing so challenge the positions of allies such as ourselves. This is particularly evident in the Indigenous domain where scholars such as Rigney (Arbon & Rigney, 2014) and Smith (Smith, 2012; Tuck, 2013) assert Indigenous authority over Indigenous research and teaching.

In the spirit of rigorous critical praxis, for a number of years now, we have interrogated ourselves, our motivations and our positioning.

Drawing on this continual reflexive practice, we present our experiential stories as allied researchers for consideration, as an interrogation of the intellectual terrain upon which a collaborative future might be built. In our minds, possibilities for the future includes a continuum of options. These are already evident today - ranging from ongoing colonisation of the stories and experiences of the “Other” to the expulsion of privileged researchers from the domains of the cultural Other in the academy.

### **Threads and themes**

Themes that emerge for consideration, as we interrogate collaborative tourism research include: whiteness, notions of otherness, research as activism and re-hegemonic worldview. These themes thread through the fabric of this discussion to define its borders, create unity, shape the form, vary its texture, perhaps ending in unresolved fragments or rent the cloth asunder.

We hope that by considering these themes, we can develop co-creative conversations about conceptions of research that influence emergent researchers to query their positions of privilege and stimulate established scholars to interrogate their practice and see their roles anew.

#### *A continuum of collaborative research*

We envisage a continuum of options to span the possibilities of collaborative research aimed at transformative change. It is important to note however, that the continuum does not represent binary opposites, nor finite categories, but encompasses fluid groupings, which are contestable, depending upon worldview and researcher(s) positioning within cultural, societal and economic conceptual frameworks. The continuum as we see it spans whiteness, critical reflexive alliances with the cultural other and Indigenous assertion.

The first, framed by whiteness, is a research space which academics might name as ‘collaborative’, for instance collaborative action research, but where authority, power is asserted by white academics from their position within the academy. Research ‘subjects’ may be invited onto campus grounds for short but repeated periods of interaction. Under conditions of whiteness, researchers objectify the researched as cultural other, but paradoxically themselves adopt an equivalent position of distance.

Spracklen asserts “whiteness ... represent[s] a particular, hegemonic but invisible power relation that privileges (and normalizes) the culture and position of white people” (2013: p.5). While globalisation, and the hybridity and mobility it has sparked, means it is important not to essentialise “white privilege” and the “whiteness” associated with it, the phenomena nonetheless describe an assertion of power and privilege that has relevance today. However, placing the cultural other at a dystopic distance, whilst confirming amongst themselves a utopic view of balance, control, power and authority. Authority in this context may be objectionable (Hanrahan & Antony, 2005).

The second on this continuum, are critical reflexive alliances, framed by equivalences of authority, mutual respect and hard work. Such heterotopic or hybrid forms are developed by researchers whose intention is to engender long lasting societal change (Gilbert & Masucci, 2008). Legitimate authority develops organically within critical reflexive alliances since authority is socially determined and usually based on expertise. Authorial power, the ability to articulate reasoned, defensible arguments, can end disputes. However, authority is contingent - it can be overthrown, altered or delegated and sadly, injustices may be amplified (Hanrahan & Antony, 2005) so that authority ebbs and flows within human interactions, affecting both the process and outcomes of research collaborations.

Researchers who engage collaboratively with ‘resisting’ others at the margins of mainstream society in cultures, communities and social movements, challenge authority and the normative practices of dominant power (Johnson, 2010). Hybrid research collectives generate alternate understandings of ‘being in the world’ and new forms of knowledge (Roelvink, 2010) that echo the process of ‘sym-poesis’ or ‘making with’ other natural and social species identified by Haraway (2016a). Haraway places sym-poesis as central to development of creative strategies of hope that embrace the trouble of living and dying in troubled, tumultuous times, and are essential to combat “global inequalities, environmental decline, mass extinction and increasing economic stratification” (Franklin, 2017 p. 49).

The third positioning of collaborative research is engagement with Indigenous knowledges and methodologies. Inspired by the work of critical theorists such as Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008) and McLaren and Jaramillo (2012), this form of critical tourism theory raises pressure on tourism scholars to engage with issues of power, voice, representation and agency in a way that invites radically new ways of understanding, managing and even overturning tourism and its practice. However, the interface between academia, Indigenous knowledges and tourism is not uncontested. There are multiple tensions: for the academy in engaging with Indigenous standpoints, for Indigenous people in trusting

the tourism academy and tourism industry, and Indigenous scholars in asserting their place in the discussions.

Engagement with Whiteness, hybridity and Critical Race Theory is essential to unpacking power, positionality and assertions of hegemony. Few in tourism studies have done this and so far, the literature in tourism largely focuses on studies of the cultural “Other” rather than a critical engagement with one’s own privilege and its implications. Perhaps the ultimate form of white privilege in the academy is the [now contested] luxury of normalising whiteness and exoticising the “Other” to the extent that the latter becomes the object of study rather than the hard critical self-interrogation of privilege.

### **Approach**

To illustrate the continuum, we will present a small number of vignettes of moments in collaboration from our own experiences, to sketch out the divides, difficulties, debates and the dangers in an ever-changing environment of research in dangerous times. Such experiential stories allow us to review the possibilities for the future. We will engage in this by drawing pictures of our experiences of colonisation, otherness, expulsion, and alliances to identify the divides, difficulties, debates and the dangers. Moreover, this process will outline the potentials and outcomes of co-created and emancipatory collaborations in the contested, heterotopic space of collaborative tourism research. This work presents ‘Our’ as a position and methodological approach that can break down dichotomies, nuance divided debates, challenge prejudices and biases and foster the smouldering hope of alliances between communities, stakeholders and Others.

The vignettes are based upon our specific experiences, as the researchers see it, but are structured on ethical grounds to ‘protect’ the interests and vulnerabilities of research participants. In our paper, we will try to go beyond the risks of engagement to provide sight and guidance about how to consolidate disruptive interventions and maintain long-lasting, transformative dialogue.

### **Discussion (Findings/vignettes)**

Our vignettes are stories that identify the goal, the obstacle, the character(s), the journey, and the resolution. Nonetheless, the narrative echoes the emotions and factual occurrences that we,

as co-researchers have experienced. Within all of these contexts, we ask ourselves and convey honestly - whose story is told, whose agenda is met?

*Speaking truth to Whiteness (Freya)*

Few want to own their white privilege. In the academy, white privilege reins and remains hidden. The ivory towers of academia are an exclusive space that one can occupy by having the money, heritage and/or esteem that often comes from generations of privilege.

However, engagement with whiteness indicates that what you have may not have been solely earned by your efforts but instead come to you as a legacy of the exploitation and oppression of “Others”. Understandings of white privilege in the academy have been in part inspired by insights gained from critical theorists such as Giroux (1992) and Giroux and McLaren (1994). In the work of “Western” researchers of privilege, the vantage of white privilege requires one to interrogate how we have come to be the researchers of “Them”, the cultural “Other” that attracts us as “Objects” of study. Overturning the supposed neutrality of the scientific and anthropological gaze, critical scholars who are game enough to own their white privilege, know that their location in research is tainted with an indelible stain and any solidarity in research must be hard won with critical reflexivity and efforts. A case study of work with a group in Palestine gave me hard-earned insights into white/western privilege.

I developed my relationship with the Alternative Tourism Group of Palestine from 2005 when I was invited to join their planning meeting working on projects such as a code for responsible tourism. These meetings occurred biannually outside of Palestine due to the difficulty that travelling to and within Palestine entails. Meetings I attended were held in Alexandria, Egypt; Madaba, Jordan; and Geneva, Switzerland. I found this international travel tiring but the efforts worth it as I learned of Palestine and its engagements with tourism. I heard stories of my colleagues travelling from Palestine about checkpoints, travel permits denied, lengthy delays in crossing borders and the other immense obstacles that made my journey seem like nothing. I heard these stories and in my mind I made mental notes about these differences.

It was only in 2013 that I finally travelled to Palestine. When I went to Palestine, I went with a white, western woman body that allowed me to pass borders, navigate checkpoints and visit places Palestinians can only dream about. I stayed with a Palestinian host in Beit Sahour in the West Bank who arranged for me to travel to Jerusalem for tours a number of times during my stay but who himself could not gain the permits to enter for he and his family to travel together. I slowly began to understand what obstacles and barriers I was

overcoming in my travels that my hosts had little hope in surmounting. The longing for Jerusalem, for the sea, for seafood, for family, for home villages was slowly brought to my consciousness. I toured the Separation Wall taking pictures of graffiti art as a tourist and walked through the cold turnstiles of the Bethlehem checkpoint, nervous but knowing little more than inconvenience would be visited upon me. However, I heard a man whisper to me “you see, they treat us like animals” [literally cattle in cattle pens as the checkpoint has turnstiles and cattle runs] and I saw the lines of Palestinians waiting to transit this barrier much more likely to be turned back or suffer long delays than I was.

I will not deny that when I left Palestine I felt relieved. The feeling of uncertainty and lack of control did not suit my temperament, which is built on assuming certain things are owed to one, feeling a sense of control which comes from a position of privilege and an idea that freedom is one’s due.

I did attempt to honour my commitments of solidarity by writing a chapter on Palestine and the right to travel, exposing what I understood about some of the limitations to Palestinian human rights to travel and free movement (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2016). However, I still work within my positioning of white/western privilege in that I choose when to act in solidarity with Palestinians and I choose when to shy away from the dangers and deprivations that being a supporter of Palestine entails; this is nothing comparable to what being Palestinian entails.

This vignette offers no packaged answers. It only offers an uncomfortable space of thinking, recognising and challenging. The nature of solidarity across differences is no easy thing. It is a struggle to engage in shared struggle when some parties have power and privilege that results in them having “less skin in the game”. How we overcome this begins with the essential first step in acknowledging this privilege and interrogating it.

#### *Hybrid reflexive alliances (Jenny)*

Developed largely in the antipodean South, hybrid research collectives use critical collaboration with resisting others to understand the adaptive strategies of vulnerable peoples (McLean, 2015) and build liveable futures appropriate to the multispecies muddles of our currently turbulent times (Haraway, 2016b). Also called venturing into ‘the wild’ (Callon & Rabeharisoa, 2003) or creating fluid experiments (Cave, Johnston, Morrison, & Underhill-Sem, 2012) the process of collective thinking is a process of “sym-poesis” or “making with” ourselves and the other natural/social species who share this earth (Haraway, 2016b).

Transformative social change (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010) may be engendered within the process, since hybrid collectives act as performative enablers who bring location,

networks, knowledge and diverse worldviews together to co-construct meaning (Gibson-Graham, 2008). Yet the full potential of such collaboration lies in the extent to which its participants ‘stay with the trouble’ of life, death and daily struggles yet is full of hope (Haraway, 2016a).

Engagement in hybrid collective research for me began within a feasibility study. Commissioned by a Pasifika advocacy group, the project team of ethnic representatives, an architect and myself, worked interactively with long-term and recent migrants, to design a \$9.0M (NZD) cultural attraction and enterprise incubator to redress marginalisation and cultural loss in New Zealand’s largest city, Auckland. Pasifika peoples are descendants of Pacific Island nations who are 7% of the nation’s population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Our village-based concept design inspired an annual government allocation for a small physical footprint, an intergenerational programme and staff (still operates today), but the work was incomplete.

A serendipitous appointment as a fulltime academic meant an opportunity to further their case. I returned to the advocacy group, with my Cook Islands ‘sister’, to propose an open-ended academic-community collaboration to investigate the barriers and enablers of cultural enterprise.

A steering group of Pasifika elders, myself and the emerging researchers collectively defined principles to guide the work such as dual cultural and research excellence, collaboration, inclusiveness at all levels, Pacific voice, cultural resonance, elder’s ownership, community affirmation and reciprocity. These protected cultural knowledge, provided ‘space’ between ethnicities and opportunities for dialogues for create meaning and synthesis.

Together, we refined a hybrid methodology grounded in Pacific methodologies designed to create “space” between ethnicities to elicit, respect and bridge worldviews which we named the ‘Mutuality Approach’. The approach co-constructs knowledge by offering non-adversarial challenge to meanings that other(s) ascribe to observations and voice, first within each ethnicity and then across them. Ownership remains with each group until verified for accuracy and consent given for analysis – unusual in the ethics of the academy. Once agreed, fresh understandings flowed forward into re-analysis of the original data using common meanings and subsequent questions. A prayer or song chosen by each ethnicity prefaces their synthesis and not included without permission (Cave et al., 2012).

Over 3 years, the group investigated innovation, cultural enterprise, community capacity and specific markets. At its height, the collective numbered 25 people - ethnic representatives and young emerging bilingual Pasifika researchers (‘cultural angels’) plus

myself, who stood beside or behind, not in front. Our findings and models influenced government research policy, local government Pasifika strategy, enterprise training and more recently, another initiative aligned to the bigger vision.

In my experience, it is difficult to disentangle from the liminal “we” of the group (Dombroski et al., 2017) to communicate meaning that makes perfect sense internally, to external others. Moreover, the work is fluid and uncertain, influenced by the vagaries of social politics and suits researchers who are tenacious and creative problem solvers. Hybrid collective research requires an immersive investment in people, place and multilevel processes that do not fit academic timelines.

Further, I found myself drawn to the heart of advocacy, to stay with the trouble in hope. Yet, my whiteness continues to frustrate me, despite an ascribed “Pacific heart” and “not like other researchers - **she** comes back”. As an Anglo-Saxon female, I am aware that even after 10 years, welcomed by some and mocked by others, I remain the Other. Recently, I turned to the indigenous side, to work in Tonga, but that is another story.

### *Stories of Indigenous assertion*

Freya and I had initially intended to include our own stories of collaboration and indigenous assertion in critical tourism research, but we feel that these stories are not ours to tell, since neither of us are indigenous people and have experienced expulsions by re-hegemonic indigeneity. We prefer to leave that voice to persons of country and to assertions already made in the tourism field.

Neither approach mentioned above, works well in indigenous contexts. Critical theory used to speak from the position of marginality by many indigenous researchers has failed to alter the conditions of indigenous inhabitants of the global South engaged in tourism. Further, collaborative hybrid research does ‘epistemic violence’ by not challenging colonial norms (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). They call for indigenous researchers to delink knowledge production and creation from Western epistemologies. And, in so doing, engage a differently formed indigenous logic that inextricably binds culture and language together, written from a bordered but equal “trans-local space betwixt and between the West and our social and cultural origins” (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p. 8).

For Lee (2017) also, Whiteness and privilege are injurious to indigenous worlds, people and epistemologies. However, decolonisation of research requires a localised, respectful and reciprocal ethics to generate mutual benefit and negate the intrusion of being an outsider (even for indigenous researchers). Objectivitised tourism spectacles extract value



from difference and continues colonial precepts of power She suggests that storytelling, as first person narrative, ‘us’ and ‘we’, takes back control, for example, of stories that ancestral women want to share of ‘women’s business’ and uncouples knowledge production from a privileged, eroticised, ‘male’ gaze. Active voice makes the teller visible redirects the gaze back at the viewer to convey an ageless physicality, inextricably connected to ‘country’ (past, present and future) and traditional knowledges and thereby, decolonises experience.

Thus, as Martin Nakata acknowledges, negotiating the requirements and procedures of the academy and ‘Indigenous knowledge, standpoints or perspectives is profoundly challenging’ (2004: p.14) in tourism practice, curricula development and knowledge creation.

## **Conclusions**

What then, do we conclude? Whose story is told, whose agenda is met by critical collaborative tourism research?

The agenda of the researcher remains to the fore in these narratives - of tourism research influenced by whiteness, co-created knowledge of hybrid collectives and indigenous voice. Perhaps we cannot escape our ethnicities, colour and biases?

Largely this situation continues because of the academic context in which we work and the prevailing ethos of whiteness. Academic credibility and voice, formats and contexts are normative - a paradoxical contradiction of our ethos of inquiry, openness and responsibility to critique, challenge and demand to be heard.

Critical collaborative tourism research that co-creates knowledge with the ‘cultural Other’ aims to work from within the worldview of disempowered communities, organisations and individuals. As researchers, we diminish our whiteness within the process of co-creation to create partnerships of understanding and hope. Nevertheless, there is a danger of becoming self-appointed social heroes and ethically, we should challenge the time we spend and the influence of our immersion in each community so that the story of the community is told, their agenda is met – not ours.

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# **Knowledge Co-Creation through Ratings and Comments on the Internet**

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## **Introduction**

In this paper, the role of ratings and comments on the internet in the process of knowledge co-creation will be investigated. Since tourism as a sector requires the contribution of tourist in order to create value, online evaluations of tourists can be considered as an important means for providing feedback to touristic companies in knowledge co-creation. This paper will be a review paper, taking different sources into consideration to discuss the impact of internet reviews and comments. Next, the paper will present a model to depict the effect of internet ratings and comments on general satisfaction of touristic experiences in a quantitative manner. Through allowing knowledge co-creation by touristic agencies and their customers, internet reviews and comments will be hypothesized as positively contributing to satisfaction of tourists, enhancing their pleasure by selecting the best option in the light of much more information. Moreover, satisfaction of tourists may be evaluated by Quality of Life (QoL), leading satisfaction variable to quantitatively measurable form.

In conclusion, the findings of this paper will implicate that comments and reviews on the internet shared by other tourists with respect to their past experiences with related services increases the satisfaction of tourists as a form of knowledge co-creation. Since internet allows numerous users to create knowledge collectively, touristic companies may benefit from the reviews and comments of their clients and change their marketing strategies accordingly. All in all, the tourism sector is dependent on the feedback of its customers in the form of value co-creation, likewise all other service sectors in today's world.

## **Methodology**

As the method, this paper will use literature review method by comparing the previous studies, with a specific consideration of the tourism studies as well as current developments in the technology.

## **Knowledge**

It has been argued that knowledge is socially constructed (Latour, 1999). In other terms, knowledge is produced out of the interaction between individuals and other individuals or the environment. Therefore, concepts like ideologies, institutional settings, culture and/or power relations are effective in the creation of knowledge (Tribe and Liburd, 2016). The concept of knowledge can be categorized under three main types; these are: lay knowledge, expert knowledge and administrative knowledge (Maiello et. al., 2013)

Starting with the concept of lay knowledge, it refers to an implicit knowledge based on common sense and casual empiricism (Maiello et. al., 2013). Lay knowledge is embedded in the context (Petts and Brooks, 2006) therefore it is useful for the understanding of local circumstances and relationships since these lay people are not professionals of a specific sector (Maiello et. al., 2013). The creation of lay knowledge stems from personal experience and through interactions with other people, hence the production and circulation of lay knowledge is seen as contingent rather than a result of an automatic process (Mendez, 2016). In short, lay knowledge belongs to citizens which requires interaction for its production but not any specific expertise.

As opposed to lay knowledge, expert knowledge is explicit and it is produced within the institutionalized contexts (Petts and Brooks, 2006). The methods and procedures for the production of knowledge is defined by communities of peers who concern with the theories and techniques on a shared formal basis (Maiello et. al., 2013). Expert knowledge can be considered as the technical knowledge, creation of which is determined by the accumulation of technical knowledge in professional environments.

Lastly, administrative knowledge denotes a specific type of explicit knowledge which relates to implicit beliefs. In other terms, formal procedures such as laws, norms, rules etc. play a crucial role in the creation of administrative knowledge, meanwhile relational and political dimensions of social context have an impact in the process. Universal scientific beliefs are at the core of administrative knowledge yet the concept is also embedded in the local reality (Maiello et. al., 2013). As a mixture of two main types of knowledge, administrative knowledge can be considered as more sophisticated as compared to lay knowledge and expertise knowledge.

Although knowledge may appear in different types and creation of which requires different social or environmental settings, the remarkable trend within the literature is that co-creation has become an integral part of knowledge production, providing both lay knowledge coming from experiences of people on a daily basis as well as the knowledge coming from

experts. In the next section, the structure of knowledge co-creation will be discussed on the basis of interactions between people with different types of knowledge.

### **Knowledge Co-Creation**

Throughout the historical progress, the structure of knowledge has been changed parallel to the developments in the means of communication. For instance, rather than traditional learning methods based on a one-way transmission of knowledge where students passively listen to the lectures, universities have started to incorporate interactive learning methods where students actively construct knowledge with their instructors (Tanaka et. al., 2016).

The relevance of local community knowledge for environmental decision-making has been highlighted through a body of empirical literature (Maiello et. al., 2013). According to these studies, individuals living in particular destinations have the knowledge that cannot be grasped without experiencing it. Similar to the value creation process which takes place in a business environment between the supplier and the customer (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012), knowledge co-creation requires the interaction of at least two people and in the specific context of tourism, and these interactions can be defined as tourist-host or tourist-tourist interactions. In this sense, knowledge co-creation plays a significant role in tourism, since it allows tourists to reflect their experiences by interacting with the service providers in particular tourism destinations.

Knowledge co-creation has gained importance especially after the shift in the perception of value from “created for user as subject” to “created with user as partner” (Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Payne, Storbacka & Frow, 2008) or perception of users from “passive audiences” to “active participants” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). Rather than adding theoretical contributions without their reflections in practice, knowledge co-creation focuses on combining theoretical background with practical implications (van Veen, Bunders & Regeer, 2013).

Furthermore, technological advancements such as internet have allowed users to share information instantly and at a global scale. For instance, websites like Booking.com offer their users to rate their experiences as well as let them share their comments. Comments are important for others to decide whether to choose that particular service and they can easily compare the multiple options that are available for them. In the next section, the main focus will be on the impact of technological developments on such knowledge co-creation activities.

## **The Impact of Technology in Knowledge Co-Creation**

Technology has been claimed to create opportunities for knowledge co-creation and resilience (Karpouzoglou et. al., 2016). Especially the developments in the means of communication, such as the invention of internet, proliferation of tablets and mobile devices create a world in which people from different parts of the world may interact instantly. These developments form the basis of further technological progress by increasing the possibility of sharing of a particular piece of knowledge.

Moreover, technology is an important source of development through forcing organizations in the market to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Umeda and Shirahada, 2014), leading to the emergence of new innovations for the market. Not only the technique equipment but also the structure of knowledge changes parallel to the development of technology. Hence, companies are changing their strategies in order to reach their customers with new demands so that they can protect their shares in the market.

Adaptation to the technological developments is no longer an option or preference; rather, it is the crucial part of a company to keep existing in the competitive structure of global markets. It is a must for almost all sectors in the economy in order to prevent information leakage, specifically the sectors related to technology (Umeda and Shirahada, 2014). Unless the service providers in the tourism market fail to follow the newly emerging technology due to their incapability of technological use, they will end up in a place that their competitors take the advantage of technology, advertise their services and obtain their market share.

After the development of technology, tourists may share their experiences in specific travel blogs, leave comments and rate in some online platforms (Fuchs & Höpken, 2011; Fuchs et. al., 2015). Then, these ratings and comments can be analyzed computationally to reveal patterns, trends and associations in tourism sector in order to meet the demands of tourist better. Meeting the demands of tourists is of great importance, since the dynamics of the market are not in favor of those who fail to meet the demands of consumers, and in the end, they get kicked out of the market.

In the next section, a model will be developed and suggested in order to measure the impact of knowledge co-creation.

## **The Model**

In order to measure the impact of knowledge co-creation, there are three main aspects. To begin with the tourism revenues, it denotes the improvements in welfare of people with respect to the tourism activities. Knowledge co-creation, as in the case of online comments and rankings, provide a useful source for tourists in the next periods for choosing the best service for their budget. Moreover, the reflections of tourists help hosts and service providers to understand the demands in the market and change their strategies accordingly. As a result, the knowledge co-creation activity affects the tourism revenues, and this relationship is expected to be positive since if a service provider can offer high-quality touristic service, positive comments of service takers (i.e. tourists) will lure more tourists for the next periods, bringing more revenue for the service providers. Thus, economic outcomes of knowledge co-creation as an integral part of tourism activity can be utilized for measuring the impact.

In addition to economic revenues, alterations in overall life quality of tourists as well as service providers can also become an indicator for measuring the impact of knowledge co-creation. Before reaching at a destination, a group of tourists barely have an idea for whether the place is capable of meeting their expectations. However, comments and ratings of previous tourists regarding to their experience with the touristic service would be helpful for the tourists to satisfy their needs and increase their quality of life (QoL) as tourists. Since this is a reciprocal process, quality of life of service providers is also taken into consideration in order to measure the overall impact of knowledge co-creation activity on the lives of individuals at a particular destination.

Lastly, technological progress is an important aspect since it has a direct influence on the impact of knowledge co-creation. As discussed in the previous section, the developments in technology leads to the advancements in the means of communication and proliferation of technological communication tools such as tablets, smart phones, laptops etc. As a result, the efficiency of information networks increase allowing people to interact with each other at a global scale. However, technological progress is subject to time variable, because technology has the characteristics of growing exponentially such that it has acceleration for doubling itself. This phenomenon is known as Moore's Law named after the work of Gordon Moore (1965) on integrated circuits.

Hence our model can be considered as:

$$(1) \text{ KC} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{TR} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{QL} + \text{TP}^t + \varepsilon$$

where,



KC implies the *impact of Knowledge Co-creation*

TR implies *Tourism Revenues*

QL implies *Quality of Life for Tourists and Service Providers*

TP implies *Technological Progress*

t implies *Time*

$\beta_0$ ,  $\beta_1$ , and  $\beta_2$  imply coefficients, and

$\varepsilon$  implies residual (i.e. the effect of other variables).

In general, the impact of knowledge co-creation is dependent on three major aspects, namely tourism revenues, quality of life of tourists and service providers and the technological progress. Additionally, there may be other variables that can explain the variance in the level of knowledge co-creation that this model cannot capture. Therefore, a residual is presented in the model, which denotes the variance that cannot be explained by the three main variables.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, the impact of knowledge co-creation can be explained with respect to three major aspects such that tourism investments, quality of life of both tourists and service providers, and technological progress. The development in the technology changes the structure of knowledge, for which there has been a clear distinction as lay knowledge and expertise knowledge. However, parallel to the developments in the means of communication, the possibility of interaction has increased at a global scale and individuals start to co-create knowledge by combining their experiences in different contexts. Therefore, online comments and rankings are useful tools for knowledge co-creation in tourism sector which play as a guideline for tourist preferences as well as the understanding of service providers to the demands in the market.

Nevertheless, there are still weak points regarding to the model. One of the major problems is that the impact of this model has not been confirmed by the practical results in real world. Although the relationship between tourism revenues, quality of life and technological progress variables seem consistent with the impact of knowledge co-creation, the relationship is only an assumption based on observances and interpretations and subject to practical implications and examination in a real world environment.

In short, knowledge co-creation through online comments and ranking is a new trend in the tourism industry, but most of the service providers in all around the world have already adapted themselves. The age of technology requires rapid adaptation to and effective use of technology, therefore the companies which fail to adapt themselves in a proper manner will lose the chance for existing in the competitive nature of global markets.

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# **First Holidays Abroad: Authenticating the Learning Environment through Memories and Storytelling**

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## **Abstract**

Authentic learning has attracted considerable attention amongst learning theorists as a pedagogical strategy that educators could adopt to address longstanding debates concerning curriculum effectiveness. Authentic learning can be defined as circumstances that resemble the complexity of the real-life application of knowledge. Although increasing support for the development of an integrated approach to the curriculum is evident, especially in tourism education, there is a lack of congruence between business practice and the university curriculum, resulting in tourism education becoming constrained with little relevance for practitioners. This has resulted in the encouragement to ground tourism education and research within authentic learning through a community of practice, which is concerned with the collaborative engagement of members through shared interactive tools, resources and knowledge. The purpose of this paper is to develop an understanding of how authentic learning was achieved through an interactive narrative research project concerned with facilitating student engagement in understanding past encounters in tourism through storytelling.

The period after the Second World War experienced a significant expansion in overseas leisure travel. The beginning of this period in modern tourism was characterised by new destinations, infrastructures and travel by air, leading to new experiences for both travellers and host communities. The 'First Holidays Abroad' project sought, through narrative research, to draw on the thoughts, memories and stories of people's experiences of overseas holidays in the period between 1950 and 1975 as a topic designed to capture memories of overseas travel as a tool for reminiscence. 30 volunteers were interviewed, following a semi-structured schedule, to 'tell their stories' of their first experience of foreign travel. We were particularly interested in how it felt to be in another country for the first time and the instances that people remembered most about their experience of travel and of being in a new environment. Those interviewed were encouraged to reflect upon the journey, the food, the weather, the people, the language, funny incidents, the hotel, how it felt then and how they feel now. These narratives and stories were then shared with tourism students as a resource for developing an understanding and reflecting upon people's first holiday experiences of overseas travel within the context of authentic learning.

Initial findings revealed much about the processes of memory, cultural awareness that accompanies travel and the cultural differences of the experience and engagement with people from other countries through tourism. In this context, authentic learning through storytelling contributed to the dialogical educational development of students through facilitating the processes of self-reflection and knowledge co-creation. It provided opportunities for remembering, conversation, reflection and pleasure, facilitating positive social change amongst those stakeholders engaged in the research project.

## **Introduction**

As a pedagogical approach to teaching, learning and curriculum design, authentic learning has attracted considerable attention in current educational debate as a means of addressing longstanding concerns regarding curriculum effectiveness (Lombardi, 2007; Remidez & Fodness, 2015). Defined as circumstances that resemble the complexity of the real-life application of knowledge (Elobeid et al., 2016; Godfrey, Illes, & Berry, 2005; Smeds, Jeronen, & Kurppa, 2015), authentic learning ‘focuses on educational activities related to real-world problems and issues’ (Deale, 2008, p. 57). Although increasing support for the development of an integrated approach to the curriculum is evident (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Currie & Knights, 2003; Steiner & Watson, 2006), especially in tourism education (Stergiou, Airey, & Riley, 2008; Zahra, 2012), there is a lack of congruence between business practice and the university curriculum, resulting in tourism education becoming constrained with little relevance for practitioners (Duane, 2012). This has resulted in the encouragement to situate tourism education in the context of authentic learning through a community of practice (Albrecht, 2012; Elobeid et al., 2016). A community of practice is concerned with the collaborative engagement of stakeholders through shared knowledge and understanding (Albrecht, 2012). For Dredge et al. (2012), the emphasis here is the importance of collaborative dialogue and shared understandings in the design, content and delivery of higher education curricula, offering a more subjectivist approach to curriculum design and therefore allowing learners to take control of their own learning (Garvey and Williamson, 2001). The purpose of this paper is to develop a critical understanding of how authentic learning was embedded in tourism curricula through storytelling as a pedagogical strategy concerned with facilitating student engagement in understanding past encounters in tourism.

## **Literature Review**

Authentic learning has found a prominent place in the current education agenda as a pedagogical approach to effective learning (Lombardi, 2007). Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989, p. 34) define authentic learning as ‘the culture in which a domain of knowledge is practiced’. Supporting this, Deale (2008, p. 57) describes authentic learning as ‘learning that focuses on educational activities related to real-world problems and issues’. It is concerned with the rediscovery of the practice of business values (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005; Elobeid et al., 2016). For Borthwick et al. (2007, p. 16), ‘authenticity comes from the connection between a student’s experience and the disciplinary mind’, where learners are engaging with the discipline as an authentic activity. Learning elements considered to be important in this

context include, for example, learner, classroom activities, discipline knowledge and the profession (Van Oers & Wardekker, 1999; Whitelaw & Wrathall, 2015). This view of authentic learning is also highlighted in Tochon's (2000) mode of authentic learning situations. In this model, the term authenticity is perceived as intersections of the situated lived experiences (of the students) and the disciplinary 'mind', expressed through planned and enacted pedagogical contexts and events. Authentic learning becomes evident through the process of 'enminding' learning activities with the historic mind of the discipline (Stein et al., 2004). As Borthwick et al. (2007, p. 17) argued, learners should be engaged in authentic reflective activities about the discipline and individual knowledge necessary to produce 'shifts in self-knowledge and in the discipline'. Therefore, authentic learning acts as a socially interactive and reflective process, as in the simulated learning process, that guides and promotes learners thinking (Airey, 2015; Belhassen & Caton, 2011; Coghlan, 2015; Nicaise, Gibney, & Crane, 2000).

Authentic learning intentionally integrates knowledge and practice as 'portable skills' that enable students to transfer knowledge, synthesis information and form judgements and conclusions within different contexts (Lombardi, 2007). To achieve this, there is a need to foster a culture of both practical engagement and academic rigour in tourism curricula (Tochon, 2000). Learning is not only about developing knowledge within educational institutions, but also a process of reinventing, refreshing and renewing the culture within communities of practice. As Van Oers and Wardekker (1999) argued, communities of practice are not static, learning has the potential to be simultaneously related to the process of authenticating personal learning and the community of practice or discipline. Therefore, authentic learning means learning to participate from a personal sense within culturally bound, often pre-set, meaning structures (Leont'ev, 1978), much of which is heavily Western orientated (Airey, 2015). However, the community of practice can quickly become inauthentic as the real-world 'natural' experience is often artificial or staged within the institution (Stein et al., 2004). To keep the balance between what is meaningful to students and appropriate for the community of practice, the context is often challenging for curriculum designers, inviting a combination of practice knowledge and academic rigour (Borthwick et al., 2007).

Learning researchers have distilled authentic learning into a number of design elements and approaches which allow educators either to embed authenticity into the curriculum through special units or part of the course assessment and feedback process (Altomonte, Logan, Feisst, Rutherford, & Wilson, 2016; Reeves, Herrington, & Oliver, 2005). Authentic learning could be embedded in the curriculum through a number of learning strategies,

including capstone experiences which combine subject areas together into a case study or an industry-based project (Athavale, Davis, & Myring, 2008; Bailey, Oliver, & Townsend, 2007), situated learning activities (Brown & Duguid, 1993; Croy, 2009; Herrington & Oliver, 1999), scenario-based learning, action research and problem-based learning (Coghlan, 2015; Lombardi, 2007; Weber & Englehart, 2011; Whitelaw & Wrathall, 2015). Lombardi (2007) argues that critical to the successful implementation of authentic practices is the assessment context. The assessment methods should be linked with the programme outcomes and the learning strategy (Creme, 2005) as well as considering issues of engagement and consistency in design (Borthwick et al., 2007; Rule, 2006; Zahra, 2012). This confirms Yeoman's (2012) reflective research on authentic learning that assessment should stimulate creative and critical skills through action research and students ability to construct and negotiate knowledge.

### *Storytelling as a Pedagogical Strategy for Authentic Learning*

Stories or narratives are increasingly considered as tools for learning and research design, with storytelling a pedagogical strategy and narrative as a research method (Coulter, Michael and Poynor, 2007). Storytelling can be perceived as tangible and inform nearly every aspect of cultural life through which customs, values and perceptions are shared and those engaged begin to understand the world around them (Coulter, Michael and Poynor, 2007; Kent, 2016; Weick, 1995). In the context of nursing, Koch (1998) describes how highly personal and emotional stories of everyday life as lived by clients and witnessed by practitioners made nursing practice more visible and authentic. Stories facilitate reflective practice and evaluation, but are also therapeutic and catalysts for change (Koch, 1998). Storytelling, therefore, is a powerful vehicle for communication (Koch, 1998) that has the ability to educate, inform, motivate and provoke a response, whether emotional or action orientated (Kent, 2016). Storytelling can take a variety of forms and is not necessarily limited to the written word. Performance, narratives and imagery are often employed as methods of capturing stories (Christensen, 2012).

In the context of education, storytelling has been found to result in transformative pedagogical work (Coulter, Michael and Poynor, 2007). Storytelling as an educational tool can support critical and multicultural understandings, develop connections between personal narratives and those of others, and develop reflectivity (Clark and Medina, 2000). Teaching through stories allows for a wider appreciation of the external influences which shape our understanding. For example, in the context of art education Deniston-Trochta (1998) recognises the social aspect of learning and therefore encouraged the use of storytelling as a

means for students to understand how social communities significantly impact their aesthetic taste and how they influence the aesthetic of others.

Considering the variety of views and perspectives put forward in this review of the literature, the notion of engagement, reflection, practical implication and communication are dominant features of current critical thinking around curriculum development. Higher Education providers have a lot to gain from authentic learning through joint engagement with students, academics and stakeholders. This would enable the development of a curriculum within a culture that acknowledges the importance of academic research, sustaining and underpinning opportunities of practical application and reflection (Alstete & Beutell, 2016). This raises questions as to what makes authentic learning effective. There is a suggestion that high levels of application, reflection and thinking are required by both the student and the educator in order to provide opportunities to activate skills developed in the programme (Blaxell & Moore, 2012). Storytelling has been identified as one approach to authentic learning that facilitates transformative pedagogy; developing critical and multicultural understandings and reflectivity. However, what has become evident here is the variety of approaches for the implementation of authentic learning. These approaches attempt to overcome the tension between higher level academic skills and the practical competencies required by the business community (Dredge et al., 2012). A community of practice, therefore, emerges which is concerned with the collaborative engagement of stakeholders through shared knowledge and understanding (Albrecht, 2012). The premise of this paper is to develop an understanding of how authentic learning was achieved through the ‘First Holidays Abroad’ project, an interactive narrative research project, concerned with facilitating student engagement in understanding past encounters in tourism through storytelling.

### *First Holidays Abroad Research Project*

In the context of this study, authentic learning was achieved through student engagement in an interactive narrative research project concerned with capturing thoughts, memories and stories of people’s experiences of overseas holidays in the period between 1950 and 1975. This period after the Second World War experienced a significant expansion in overseas leisure travel. The beginning of this period in modern tourism was characterised by new destinations, infrastructures and travel by air, leading to new experiences for both travellers and host communities. The ‘First Holidays Abroad’ project was designed to capture memories of overseas travel during this period as a tool for reminiscence. 30 volunteers were interviewed,



following a semi-structured schedule, to 'tell their stories' of their first experience of foreign travel. Those interviewed were encouraged to reflect upon the journey, the food, the weather, the people, the language, funny incidents, the hotel, how it felt then and how they feel now.

These narratives and stories were shared with students as an authentic learning resource for developing an understanding and reflecting upon people's first holiday experiences of overseas travel. These stories were used as a pedagogical resource in encouraging students to consider and evaluate tourism and leisure experiences in the period after the Second World War. This period in modern tourism was characterised by new destinations and air travel, leading to new experiences for both travellers and host communities. The stories which were shared with the students capture these new experiences from those individuals who were the first to consume this new form of tourism.

Narrative research is an approach that enables the researcher to systematically gather, analyse and represent people's stories as told by them. Stories are reconstructions of a person's experiences, remembered and told from a particular perspective. They do not represent 'life as lived' but rather representations of those lives. Storytelling allows for the sharing of memorable, interesting knowledge that brings together layers of understandings about a person and their culture. It helps to organise information about how people have interpreted events, the values, beliefs and experiences that guide those interpretations, and their hopes, intentions and plans for the future. Complex patterns, descriptions of identity construction and reconstruction, and evidence of social discourses that impact on a person's knowledge creation from specific cultural standpoints may emerge (Sandelowski, 1991). Narrative knowledge, therefore, is created and constructed through stories of lived experiences and the meanings created.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative, interpretive approach was adopted as the methodological philosophy for this study. The interpretive approach is concerned with those being studied providing their own explanation of their situation or behaviour (Veal, 1997). In this context, it is assumed that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them (Orlikowski, and Baroudi, 1991). This purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of how authentic learning was achieved through an interactive narrative research project concerned with facilitating student engagement in understanding past encounters in tourism through storytelling. Understanding a social process

involves understanding the world of those generating it (Rosen, 1991). In the context of this study the subjective views that the informants were likely to express regarding teaching and learning is acknowledged and therefore an interpretive approach was chosen.

Qualitative data relating to students' views and experiences were elicited through a focus group. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select the study's sample. A total of 8 undergraduate students participated in the focus group, which lasted 65 min, was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. The focus of the discussion was framed around storytelling as an approach to teaching and learning. Specific modules were chosen where students had experienced the authentic learning pedagogical approach adopted by engaging in the 'First Holidays Abroad' project. A thematic approach to the analysis the data was adopted which seeks to identify, analyse and describe patterns and themes within a qualitative data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that there is an absence of any clear guidelines regarding thematic analysis and consequently outline a framework in which thematic analysis can be undertaken providing rigour and validity to such analysis. The approach of thematic analysis was therefore applied in this research providing a flexible framework adaptable to the research question and data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## **Discussion**

For Coulter, Michael, and Poyner (2007), storytelling results in transformative pedagogical work, with teaching through stories allowing for a wider appreciation of the external influences which shape our understanding. It is evident from the respondents that engaging with the stories collected as part of the 'First Holidays Abroad' project resulted in students "having a better appreciation" and a "more in-depth understanding" of the topic. Engaging with the stories helped to bring the "teaching to life" and "make the topic seem more relevant" and "enjoyable". For a number of students it was the personal nature of the stories which "made it seem real" and "genuine". One student in particular commented, "I felt I was able to personally connect with the stories being told and then as a result better reflect on my own travel experiences and how they compare". Storytelling as an educational tool has been found to support critical and multicultural understandings, develop connections between personal narratives and those of others, and develop reflectivity (Clark and Medina, 2000). For Deniston-Trochta (1998), it is the social aspect of learning that is significant here and it is evident in this study that student understanding was significantly enhanced due to the social and personal nature of the stories being told. This is echoed by Koch (1998), who describes

how highly personal and emotional stories result in more visible and authentic forms of learning.

One of the important aspects of authentic learning is enabling students to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts (Stein et al., 2004). In other words, authenticity comes from the connection between a student's experience and the disciplinary 'mind' (Borthwick et al., 2007; Smeds et al., 2015). Students responded to the opportunity of engaging with the stories, commenting that:

“It has not only transformed my way of thinking about travel experiences, but also how I interpret the concepts discussed in class. I feel I now better understand the practical implications of the theoretical concepts that we have been looking at”.

The above finding confirms the enminding model, that the term authenticity comes through the intersections of the situated lived experiences amongst students and the disciplinary 'mind', expressed through planned and enacted pedagogical contexts and events (Tochon, 2000; Whitelaw & Wrathall, 2015). In other words, authentic learning acts as a social interaction process that guides and promotes learners thinking (Airey, 2015; Coghlan, 2015; Nicaise et al., 2000).

It is evident from the review of the literature that a number of approaches can be adopted in authenticating the learning environment in programmes of study. Project work with local organisations and SMEs, case studies, work-based activities, personal research and experiences are common approaches to authenticating the learning environment. Such activities confirm Reeves et al. (2005) and Gupta, Goul and Dinter's (2015) argument that a number of design elements and approaches should be considered to allow educators either to embed authentic learning into the curriculum through special units or part of the course assessment and feedback process. In the context of this study, it is evident that authentic learning through storytelling contributed to the dialogical educational development of students through self-reflection and knowledge co-creation. The project provided students with the opportunity to integrate their subject knowledge with real-life social contexts. For Weber and Englehart (2011) and Benn et al. (2015) this is important as students experience social responsibility through civic engagement, strengthening their sense of corporate citizenship, sustainability and social responsibility.

It would seem that the engagement with stakeholders outside of the institution resulted in students feeling that learning was “more relevant” and “authentic”, with one student

commenting “hearing other peoples stories was a great experience and one where I learnt a lot about myself”. For Tribe (2001) and Whitelaw and Wrathall (2015), curriculum development should take into account the breadth of stakeholder values and embrace tourism’s broader role and contribution in society. From the student perspective, the concepts being applied to real life represent expressions and understanding of the community of practice (Elobeid et al., 2016). The role of situated learning where authentic context reflects the way knowledge will be used in real life has been highlighted in the literature (Blaxell & Moore, 2012; Brown & Duguid, 1993; Herrington & Oliver, 1999). As acknowledged, a situated learning environment provides learners with the opportunity to reflect the way knowledge will ultimately be used where knowledge is not fragmented and simplified by the facilitator (Coghlan, 2015). The findings reveal that storytelling as a pedagogical tool for authentic learning allowed students to understand different points of view through collaboration and understandings of lived experiences.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper was to develop an understanding of how authentic learning was achieved through an interactive narrative research project concerned with facilitating student engagement in understanding past encounters in tourism through storytelling as a pedagogical strategy. Authentic learning has attracted significant attention in educational debate as a means of addressing longstanding concerns regarding curriculum effectiveness (Lombardi, 2007; Remidez & Fodness, 2015). A number of curriculum design elements and approaches to embedding authenticity in to the curriculum are evident in the literature. However, this study was concerned with storytelling as an educational approach to authenticating the learning environment. This research has identified that storytelling as a pedagogical approach to authentic learning was identified as a means of contributing to the dialogical educational development of students facilitating the processes of self-reflection and knowledge co-creation. Authentic learning in this context allowed individuals to become aware of the relevancy of their own learning and facilitated an integrated approach to knowledge development. In addition, the sharing of stories enabled positive social change by facilitating cultural awareness amongst learners.

There are a number of limitations and research avenues that merit further investigation which should be acknowledged. First, limitations usually associated with a relatively small sample size do apply. However, given that such rich data was collected during the focus group

this is not seen as problematic. This study has explored the potential of storytelling as a pedagogical strategy that facilitates authentic learning. This has provided a series of foundational themes which can then be used to develop further studies to explore the opportunities of storytelling for authentic learning in Higher Education.

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## Learning amongst the Trees and Volcanoes

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### Prologue

The two study programs referred to in this story are Geology and Ecotourism Management, both graduate programs leading to a professional title from the University Andrés Bello in Chile, which have three campuses in different cities. Geology is concerned with earth science and Ecotourism is located in the institute of Ecology and Natural Resources that introduce ideas of nature as a place (territory) that can be either in a pristine, unspoiled state or intervened in possession of qualities that are attractive to visit for tourists and possible to assess on that account, the economic aspect of the ecotourism activity is defined as being committed to a sustainable development.

The Ecotourism program contains a multidisciplinary combination of topics reaching from natural science, humanities, economy and entrepreneurship, to an emphasis on outdoor techniques, nature interpretation and tourism operations. To graduate, all the students undertake two periods of internship in either a private tourism firm or in a public institution, the length of one and two month respectively. The differences in the way nature is presented and examined inside the both programs reflect an intention to provide students with a relatively un-dogmatic and pluralistic study environment with the aim to promote discussions and reflections, but this also puts a demand on the students to find and test their own ideas, opinions and practices related both to their professions and to nature as a condition for life.

This process is an important part of our story of an inquiry undertaken with students who completed a one month professional internship in the summer period after their second, third or fourth year of study. The place is Nothofagus Science Center, located in the Biosphere Reserve in the Andes Mountain Range in central Chile called *Nevados de Chillán-Laguna del Laja*, which covers 564.000 ha. Here about 8.000 people live in seven local settlements with one enjoying an important tourism development due to growing accommodations, increasing services and a skiing resort. Nothofagus Science Center is committed to the formation of young scholars by means of methods that while respecting known standards for scientific inquiry finds its inspiration in these vibrant surroundings which combine ancient forests with



living geological sites fed by active volcanoes. We set out to explore *if* and *how* methodologies inspired in outdoor (place) and problem-based learning that recognizes different talents and learning styles, encourages teamwork and provides a supportive environment for reflective decisions, can lead to important learning outcomes, co-creation of knowledge and result in high quality student led investigations.

The story we now unfold has not yet ended, but until now three summer's work with thirteen students constitute the scenario and characters, currently twelve new students are engaged in a different scheme based on a regular course study. To tell the story we must develop a double perspective with one tale inside another like Russian dolls, we both ask how this learning experience is perceived and enacted by the students... *their stories*, and if this study arrangement enhances specific curricular knowledge, learning skills and ultimately a way of becoming in the world... *our story*.

## **Methodology**

The experiment started in January 2015 when five students answered the invitation from Nothofagus Science Center to complete their professional internship there. The objective was for the students to initiate the baseline studies of potentials for scientific tourism in the Biosphere Reserve.

Before the start we, the director of the Center and the director of the Ecotourism Management program, had agreed on the objectives for the internships and each student formally registered their course, but half way into the period a new meeting took place in the Center where it was agreed to broaden the scope of the work and include formal collection of information regarding the process, the students learning outcome, their organizational capacity and self-evaluation, to employ assessment tools such as portfolios in addition to the reports already initiated. The students were challenged to define their own personal learning goals and urged to co-create propositions for new experiences of geotourism, miniature tourism, photo safaris and bird watching. During the stay every student wrote an individual report with his or her findings using technical instruments such as GPS, designing route maps, data registration, photographs, field guides etc. they also used relevant discoveries made by their companions in their final proposals, as well as imagined the significance for visitors. Additionally, they were asked to write about the meaning the stay had for them.

In this way, an educational investigation began, heuristic in scope and open in structure, sensible to place, people and conditions but oriented towards the discovery of the potentials

for co-creation of knowledge about nature/cultures in this particular setting. As such the study is based on a case, developed in three different stages with different prime actors during the summers of 2015, 2016 and 2017. It can be inscribed in a social constructionist view.

As for the Problem-based learning (PBL) approach, we followed the recommendations given by Hung, (2011). We suggest that a Pure PBL model was implemented in which the “learning [was]initiated by a need to solve a real world, ill-structured problem, no lectures were given beforehand, the problem solving reasoning was led by the learners, the content and knowledge acquisition was self-acquired, the timing of knowledge acquisition and application was simultaneously, the problem solving process was an inquiry process, the content contextualization was very high, the structuredness was medium ill- structured” (Hung, 2011, pp. 6-7). In terms of the results related to the efficiency of content knowledge, the acquisition/coverage, knowledge application and transfer, problem solving and reasoning skills, self-directed learning skills and the ability to cope with uncertainty, they were differentiated for the students as could be expected, but all in a range from high to medium. Also, the method implicated the development of a working plan and periodic discussions and consulting with the facilitator in this case the Director of Nothofagus Science Center and co-author of this story.

The second aspect of the methodology relate to the data sampling process and analysis where ethnographic participant observation, focus group and student portfolios were used followed by a typological analysis and interpretations that are on an exploratory stage, open for discussion.

### **Theoretical framework**

Several other fields of study, contribute to the theoretical and analytical framework of this inquiry: Nature Anthropology, Outdoor Education and Ecotourism. In them, the ideas of nature and nature’s way of situating itself in the center of attention for the shaping of a livable world are core discussions. We shortly introduce these and indicate how some currents inside them oriented our practical interpretation of place-based learning.

Anthropologists, e.g. (Hastrup, 2013, 2014; Ingold, 2011, 2013, 2015; Tsing, 2013, 2014 and Haraway, 2007) have focused on the ways entanglement occurs in the world between living beings - humans and others, and put to the fore the study and description of the multiple forms of movement and interrelationships created between different but equal species. They are critical both to fellow scholars inside the social sciences who maintain the dichotomy

of culture and nature and more so to the modernist scientific project that (still) claims human control and domination over nature and seeks to overcome environmental crisis by technological means without considering the interdependent nature of people and their surroundings. They follow and describe how human societies react to, incorporate and form nature in their creation of livable spaces with meaning and they contest the concept of nature as a separated out-there-ness.

Recently the Ecotourism concept has been discussed mainly by European scholars and criticized for its western neo liberalistic influence, for instance according to Fletcher (2015) “the practice of ecotourism is grounded in a characteristically western dichotomy between opposing realms of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, compelling a quest to cross the line from ‘culture’ into ‘nature’ in pursuit of a romanticized ‘wilderness’ space” (p. 4) and Duffy (2013) claims that the “dynamic of global tourism reveals an underlying neoliberal world order that draws specific places and animals into the world economy” (p. 1). But despite the claimed neo liberalization of nature, we find that our empirical exploration among ecotourism and geology students indicates that nature and therefore place does have an impact on learning and thus the relationship human beings can develop towards stewardship and conservation. Furthermore, it seems that environmental problems such as climate change, floods, droughts, habitat loss and natural disasters have succeeded in escaping the commodifying intent from the neoliberal worldview, especially in a country (Chile) where people constantly are confronting natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, volcano eruptions, droughts and forest fires. Social resilience could then mean the opportunity for young people to study and understand how to prepare themselves to “take creative action on the basis of a localized understanding of the environment” (Hastrup, 2014b, p.3) and train their capacity to transfer this knowledge to leisure seeking fellow humans whether national or foreign via tourism experiences entrepreneured and controlled by themselves.

### **The stories**

We are now ready to tell their tales; following ethnographic analysis and storytelling practice we present excerpt from portfolios, group discussions and researcher reflections.

It was dawn in the forest Lodge, the students began to load their backpacks into the ATV, a busy day awaited, four to five hours walking up the steep side of the volcano to the Valley of Aguas Calientes. They will not come back that day, too much to do up there without clearly knowing how to go about it nor what might be achieved. They had arrived a few days

earlier and they did not know each other beforehand, but their initial expectations were high. Ignacio always wanted to: *do the internship in some cool place, where to meet, learn, and have a real work experience.*

For Felipe, it was almost a dream to feel: *obliged to work in the field, in the South, between native trees; for a month to discover aspects of a forest hitherto actually invisible to my attention, it was something like a perfect sentence with a reward guaranteed in the form of knowledge.* But reality had surprised them.

Andrea felt that for the first time she: *was really doing the job of a truly exploring geologist and that is incredibly much better than being in a classroom listening to or viewing any slide.*

For Paola, a geology student it was incredible to see: *how the evolution of a rock, cold, carved by erosion and the passage of glaciers, runoff and fast winds, comes to generate the first layer of substrate by the action of mosses, fungi, lichens and crawling autotrophs.*

Felipe however also faced existential problems: *That mixture between theoretical study in books, articles, schedules, and the work in direct contact with nature, between rivers, trails, trees, fallen trunks and waterfalls, gave me what I value highest, what I mostly emphasize in my learning process: a new and different way of seeing reality as it is presented to me. Although, as I began to digest the practical internship work, I only encountered confusions which were in turn cause for disappointment.*

Andrea still floated on her discovery of the surroundings: *To carry out a full study either in ecotourism issues or in geology inside a World Biosphere Reserve is priceless. Perform geological studies while a whole family of Black Woodpeckers are pecking along behind you, or for example hike to Aguas Calientes and see three condors planning less than 10 meters above your head, and to know that there is a Fox cave here on these grounds, are things that I never thought I would see, but they have become real.*

Ignacio agreed with her: *Not everybody can spend half of his working time in the field, knowing thoroughly the most beautiful corners of a biosphere reserve, reaching the top of a volcano, visiting a beautiful plateau of volcanic formation, swimming in the turquoise waters of a lake at almost 2000 meters above sea level, and enjoy until the morning the exquisite hot spring at the foot of Vulcan Chillán.*

But not everything was a bucolic landscape.

At eleven o'clock one morning, down in the lodge, the teachers phone rang.

Teacher! Teacher! The volcano has erupted!

Yes?

But look! Hurry!

Effectively from Vulcan Chillán, a huge column of smoke and ash raised.

Are you OK?

Yes teach.

Are you at risk?

It doesn't seem so really, but everybody else is running down the mountain...

Well on one side there will be lava and lahars, the volcano is expelling smoke, gases and ash.

Take 10 minutes to look at the column, observe the wind and make your decision. Then let me know...

After some tense 20-30 minutes, the group decided to go on with their expedition. They reached the Valley of Aguas Calientes whose starry night Paola described as *the longest, brightest and lightest in space that I have ever seen*.

Afraid? Yes. They were afraid. And they doubted. But they resolved the problem reasonably, and the next day this was just an episode more in a thrilling adventure, a story to be told at the return.

But there were other difficulties to eradicating fear.

The fear of challenges; the fear of making decisions; the lack of confidence.

Some of them took almost philosophical form: *When I heard about the topic of the study I was to take on, I got completely confused it was more than an internship, I was faced with a challenge that involved going into unknown lands*", Felipe complained. *The thought of this challenge, meant for me a real conflict with my capabilities of autonomous learning. The comfort of feeling safe with what one declares to know, inevitably provokes intellectual drought periods. In them, prevails the overvaluation of the "own" knowledge and a widespread conformity. I had some very basic notions on bryophytes, that they are plants as the rest of the vascular flora, but when it came to lichens, my knowledge left me alone.*

Felipe's internal conflict was unleashed: *It was really hard to even understand what the books said about mosses and liverworts, hornworts, and lichens, it is almost a cryptic language that generated more than one headache to me. Finally, though the theoretical work let me distinguish between beings who seemed at first glance totally indistinguishable (all mosses were for me only that Mosses!) As I began to distinguish between bryophytes and lichens I also realized that both the abundance and diversity of organisms increased exponentially, and this increased my ignorance...*

For others, the issue was more serious:

Teacher, we are doing the geomorphological characterization of the places you asked for.

Good; And?

We have only found one paper published on the subject.

So, what is the problem?

It is that we do not agree with what it says... and we do not know how to write the report.

Should we do it based on the published work?

I don't know the gentleman who wrote that paper, but I know you and I trust you! Write what you know; write what you have seen; give me arguments; yours will be the opinion of this Center...

God, what we have gone into! Now we will have to respond to that...

Thirty days of professional internship can be very short when over; but very long when there is a vast and diverse territory to explore, record and research. The days passed, and the job was taking shape.

*We were getting to know each other more and more. To form a solid working team and able to deal with the various situations that arise, the knowledge of the team, with respect to their capabilities, skills, abilities and limitations, is vital.*

And little by little insecurity vanished, and talents emerged. The uncertainty generated by surprise, admiration and wonder began to transform into motivation and commitment.

Paola confessed: *This month I have marveled over geological formations and the land that surrounds us, places that I not even for a moment thought could exist. I have worked surrounded by the vastness of materials from the depths of the Earth: ashes, volcanos and rocks of all types, accompanied by a gentle sunset. A sweet air of tranquility.*

Andrea reflects: *On the way, you encounter new things that make you want to move forward and seek knowledge beyond these things. This cannot be taught in a classroom. On this occasion, the classroom is a World Biosphere Reserve and that is priceless.*

Felipe has overcome his troubles: *trees, shrubs, annuals, flowers and all the wonders of the vascular flora, were overshadowed by small beings who dwell beneath the forest floor. In the shadows of trees and plants between rocks, amongst the fallen trunks, under embankments and landslides as on river beds there is a wealth of small beings almost invisible and certainly forgotten.*

*"Simultaneously the practical work helped me understand more graphically and in real time those strange concepts used in the literature to describe those small creatures.*

Even leaving their comfort zone began to be valued: *It is even more enriching when you have doubts, to explore them and discuss them with your peers...*

*Not only was it perfect to be right in the middle of the territory to explore, in a forest of robles, but also the relative autonomy with which I was able to develop my work. This just enhanced my interest and my desire to learn...*

*Every day it was more interesting and at the same time more unknown.*

*A magnifying glass and a cell phone camera allowed me for moments to observe tiny landscapes with tiny organisms that were true forests in miniature.*

Andrea recalls: *Being free to choose my presentation format, not having the pressure to deliver results and/or progress periodically, but the possibility of working in one's own rhythm, made it much more enjoyable, and I think the results were much better in terms of quality and the depth with which the topics could be addressed.*

Finally, thirty days of work ended. Along with nervousness about finishing their reports, the students made comments and assessments, the most relevant aspects were ranked. Number one doubtlessly was the place, the Biosphere Reserve and its inhabitants. Teamwork was second: *To work with other students is very important, since this implies that we all learn from each other. For me, working with three geology students was of utmost importance, since they contributed with information and knowledge that, without them, would have been impossible to get* says Ignacio, who strives to discover tourist attractions between lava and volcanic rocks.

*To live a month with two geology students, like me, and two ecotourism students, was a very positive decision for the research topics, Camila recognizes. I felt nurtured by their knowledge and able to exercise mine. Their lessons were spectacular; now I know how much weight, and how much water, to carry in a backpack and how many things are actually unnecessary to take on a fieldtrip. I'm leaving with the feeling of having helped our friends, telling them about the various processes that have shaped this land form and most of all Felipe with his endless questions trying to understand it all, which he achieved very well.*

*Learning to read macro landscapes is something that has fascinated me since I started my studies. To understand the morphology from invisible plate tectonics is something amazing I have discovered thanks to my geology friends, certainly a great advantage for my ecotourism profession. It is Felipe, who has returned to reality and is now fascinated with that hard, rocky and multicolored world.*

About autonomy other reflections surfaced:

*The relative autonomy I had to develop my work, favored my interest and my desire for learning. In each geological site, your abilities to decide what to focus on, was tested. This was what I liked the most* says Andrea, who at first was overwhelmed by the absence of a geology teacher.

Another issue is worth mentioning:

*We learned the importance of communicating our knowledge in a simple way so that it can be understood by everybody and not only by professionals in our own area, and in that way help people understand the different processes that has occurred to shape the place they inhabit today,* says Camila, *Nothofagus does science for society not for scientists, the knowledge we generate should serve and be understandable for the people interested in these issues.*

In the opinion of a future geologist:

*The moments I'll remember most are: visiting beautiful places, understanding the why of the landscape; learning to recognize birds just by listening to their songs.*

Afterwards every student continued their educational paths, although important changes had happened, as we shall see.

## **Epilogue**

Looking back on one hundred days of active fieldwork with three groups of students, both tangible research based knowledge and intangible attitudinal and personal competence results emerge. Nothofagus Science Center has accumulated twenty-four reports -800 pages - with information and valuable new co-created knowledge and valuable experience has been acquired in the process.

The reports:

- Six containing base-line data for ecotourism, particularly on identification and characterization of ecotourism attractions.
- Two that reconstruct the geologic history of the place, recording the evolution of the volcanic complex Nevados de Chillán during the past 23 million years.
- Nine geomorphologic studies that recognize the genesis of the Earth's surface along with the history, evolution and interpretation of the landscape.
- Three that identify and characterize the petrologic sites, leaving a collection of rocks and minerals from the volcanic complex.



- Three proposals for Scientific Ecotourism products in the sites of Vulcan Renegado; Valle de Aguas Calientes and Laguna del Huemul.
- One characterization of the tourism offers existing in the area.

Furthermore, three students decided to write the final theses for their graduate exam because of these internships:

*"Six days on the track of the huemul, the design of a crossing of the Biosphere Reserve Nevados de Chillán - Laguna del Laja.* by Nicole Benavente who passed with distinction.

*A structural model for the volcanic complex Nevados de Chillan, Bío-Bío Region".* Memory to obtain the title of geologist, written by Marc MeulleStef, approved with the highest distinction.

*"Design of an ecotourism product in the volcanic complex Nevados de Chillán"* almost completed by Sebastian Aguilera.

## **Conclusions**

This exploratory research has shown to be complex and it did not consider all the aspects that eventually ended up being modified. Nevertheless, we consider that our findings pertaining to a combination of Problem and Place Based Learning with Nature are significant in pointing towards positive learning outcomes, co-creation of knowledge and high-quality student led investigations. Interesting questions also arise though: Does the traditional school system inhibit the full unfolding of human potential? Are the observed results only valid for a certain type of disciplines or subjects? What specifically causes this "blooming" of abilities? Is it nature, in generic terms? Is it the place and its specific features (forests and volcanoes)? Is it the partnership relations and cooperation established between the students? Or between them and the forest habitants? Is it the confidence in them that works as a new kind of pressure which compromises in a new way?

In our on-going work, we shall sharpen our eyes and instruments to further explore these questions.

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# **Who has the right to speak about tourism? On power and representation in the tourism policy creation**

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## **Introduction**

The broadest description of a tourism policy asserts that it ‘can be defined as a set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives and development/promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting long-term tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken’ (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006). Further, if we want to operationalize tourism policy and activate it as a process, we need to know there is a framework consisting of people (individuals, households or communities), organizations (public, private and civil), leisure and tourism services/facilities, the environment and the processes which link previous elements - planning, marketing, political processes and the use, purchase and consumption of services (Veal, 2002: 4). Planning is a basic activity that should set the framework for particular actions. Still, there is a lack of rigorous debate about the distribution of power in planning and policy making (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011: 366). Tourism plans and policies are sometimes used as undisputable prescriptions of how tourism should be developed. They come as government final ‘products’ with sets of guidelines to be followed. The notion of power has little been considered within tourism policy and strategy making. However, power is highly relevant, it dominates tourism discourses and actions which in turn reproduce themselves, further perpetuating the stories and meta-narratives about tourism.

Mostly, tourism is seen through pro-economic development approach to local tourism policy, focusing merely on its marketing and promotion (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). It happens that the resultant tourism policy directions in tourism are aligned with the interests of ‘big players’, mostly major tourist service providers and international consulting companies outsourced by the city government. That approach stems from the rational paradigm that relies on ‘tangible processes and techniques involved in preparing a plan’ (Stevenson, Airey, & Miller, 2008). In order to illustrate the process of policy creation, I would introduce the term ‘functionalism’ that emanates from architecture and urban planning and relates to the creation of the material acts of individuals. That means that notions of ‘spatial practice’ and ‘space’ need to be objectified in the spatial structures, produced by specialists of space (architects, urban planners, geographers, urban sociologists) and represented in spatial constructs. Through their mechanisms of exclusion they formulate the dominant ways of representing and exercising power over space (Prigge, 2008: 53). If I make a parallel with tourism planning and policy creation, ‘objectification’ could be reflected in creation of narratives that should serve the tourism industry. This is done by ‘specialists of tourism’, meaning representatives of consulting companies, who are mainly appointed by government authorities. Those experts are faced with the task that relies on ‘the normative/prescriptive tradition, which seeks to provide guidance on the content of policy for the development and management of tourism’ (Dredge, Jenkins, & Whitford, 2011: 13). Assigned to plan tourism as a commercial activity, they are

faced with the task to unify different activities, identities and actors from different fields in order to stimulate economic growth. By doing so, tourism experts often miss the particularities that exist in a society, ignoring the social fabric, processes and actors that are a part of a particular moment. It is not clear whether it is deliberative action, lack of sensibility or knowledge on participative inclusive decision making processes. Whatever the case, the result is that 'what is diverse becomes homogeneous and what is complex becomes simple' (Anholt, 2010: 53). Despite the awareness that simplification and homogenization are taking place, there is also a need to discover how those processes are developing and where the source of power is at a given moment. As Sandercock says, 'we need to be attentive to how power shapes which stories get told, get heard, carry weight' (Sandercock, *Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice*, 2003).

Apart from rational paradigm and technical planning, tourism could be considered as a phenomenon that encompasses, besides government and service providers, a variety of disciplines and actors. Interest groups that are tangled by tourism could be citizens, as well as independent artists, craftsmen, pensioners, students, unemployed and representatives of other social strata. Those groups are usually excluded and misrepresented in tourism policy creation, leaving the whole world of cultural spaces, lives and languages of the place out of the reach. In recent years, there has been a rising sensibility that public policy should reflect a 'broader understanding of the political, societal and human context of public sector-led decision making' (Stevenson, Airey, & Miller, 2008). However, if policy and planning are to be considered as active agents, there should be more than understanding – they should include communications, interactions, negotiations and constant reconsiderations of once established guidelines. Apart from that, a key challenge for improving planning and opening up participation is to enable equal opportunities for different actors to influence political decisions. These influences reinforce the notion that tourism planning and policy is (or should be) a result of the thoughts, ideas, actions, collusions and collaborations of diverse actors, agencies and institutions (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011: 2).

As previously mentioned, the technical planning of tourism relies mostly on government and expert actions that are conducted in a top-down manner and directed by dominant power holders and ideologies. Usually, those engaged in planning, as a state-directed activity, are members of the dominant culture, and therefore less likely to recognize, let alone question, dominant cultural norms and practices (Sandercock, 2003, 2000). Consequently, tourism development plan coincides with dominant cultural norms by representing and suiting them to fit the perceived tourist needs. This process of cultural commodification consists of choosing the elements of a local culture and assigning them particular narratives and meanings. That confirms MacCannell's idea that 'tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition, a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs' (MacCannell, 1992: 1). Tribe pointed out that tourism research carries with it a subtle power to privilege some groups whilst excluding others and to tell stories in particularistic ways (Tribe, 2006). He refers to tourism research and knowledge creation, but I argue that similar pattern is used in tourism policy creation, which is being framed by dominant power holders that are forcing the 'truth of power' (ibid). The question that remains is what is being chosen to represent a particular destination, and with which purpose. Other part of the same

question is why are other elements excluded and is there any hidden agenda for this action, or is it only superficial reproduction of once established patterns.

In order to reflect upon what is being (deliberately or not) chosen and included in tourism policy, with reference to the power and dominant narrative creation, I have to refer to the notion of representation. Hall describes representation as a 'meaning making process in culture', which implies entering into the very constitution of things. This constitutive process is as important as the creation of economic or material 'base' in shaping social subject and historical events. By pointing to the importance of a process, Hall leaves a space for challenge, contest and transformation of what representation should be, as opposed to static reflection of the world after the event, when things have been fully formed and their meaning constituted (Hall, 1997: 5-6). By perpetuating already existing narratives and elements, the processes of transforming, re-creating and contesting dominant meaning are disabled, leaving those who were once left out still out of it, preserving the status quo without questioning power relations, visibility and agency of those who are underrepresented.

In the field of tourism, it could be debated about representation *in* and *through* tourism. The first type of representation refers to involvement of various social agents in decision-making and distribution of resources that are either invested in or received from tourism activities. The latter type refers to engagement in the meaning-making processes which result in destination branding, which is closer to Hall's notion of cultural representation. Exclusion or inclusion in these two types of representation have different impacts: in the first case – distribution of wealth; in the second – shaping of cultural representations. By taking the example of the city of Novi Sad, here I will try to shed light on how the 'functionalism approach' excludes a variety of possible tourism stakeholders in both types of representation, while legitimizing and reproducing the existing power relations in the tourism field.

### **The example of Novi Sad**

The subject of the analysis is the city of Novi Sad in Serbia. In particular, the main actors are the city government as (still) the main body for directing official tourism offer, and non-governmental cultural organizations that operate in the cultural field, but are not included in tourism planning nor practice. I will try to illustrate the dominant narrative of the City of Novi Sad, how functionalism and technical planning dominate the process of tourism and cultural representation and how the lack of communication results in a complete exclusion of one vital cultural sector from meaning-making processes and representation *in* and *through* tourism.

This is a story of two ideologically different sectors. One is the City's economic development sector, a key actor of which is the economic development department that founded the tourist organization of Novi Sad<sup>1</sup>. The other is a civil (or non-governmental) sector in the cultural sphere, which is independent in terms of ideology and programming, but which depends on funding through public bids. The rationale for choosing this cultural field is because it is the most diverse and vivid part of the overall cultural system, with a low number of employees but the highest production of yearly programs (Cvetičanin, 2011). These actors are practically

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<sup>1</sup> Putting tourism in the economy field of administration anticipates that tourism is an economic activity that should provide profit, together with trade and industrial production.

invisible, both for cultural and tourism policy makers, since the picture of Novi Sad is presented through 'traditional' cultural resources and institutions – theatres, galleries, museums, cinemas and sacral buildings (Tourist organization of Novi Sad, 2017).

Tourism policy is reflected through a 'Program for tourism development of the city of Novi Sad' that was created by Horwath HTL, a management consulting company, in 2010. This program is based on a market-oriented approach to tourism planning, which means that tourism policy is created in a way that experts created a set of directions by which tourism should be developed. Based on a universal matrix, the experts analyzed then-current state of tourism offer, tourist demand, infrastructure and landmark features and came with a short, mid- and long term tourism products. The final aim of this program is to develop a tourism marketing strategy for the City of Novi Sad (Tourism Development Program, 2010). Within the program, the vision of tourism was defined, emphasizing that 'interests and wishes of local actors are harmonized' on the basis of which a 'guidance for improvement of life and sustainable tourism development' (ibid) was created. Who are the local actors whose interests and wishes were taken into account are unknown, but having an experts' starting point we contend that the discussion stayed within closed circles of 'representable' tourism stakeholders from the tourism industry and the city government. The program highlights the key features of the city that are claimed to have the highest potential to be sold in the short term. Those are the Petrovaradin fortress, the EXIT festival<sup>2</sup>, the river Danube and the city's multiculturalism<sup>3</sup>. As experts advised, for further development of these features, the professionalization and introduction of good strategic and operational marketing are of a key importance. This program has been adopted by the City Assembly, and remains in force to this day.

After examining the 'Program for tourism development of the city of Novi Sad' and seeing the approach upon which the streamlines were created, I wanted to get more familiar with the way tourism is being perceived by people working in the tourism public field, as well as by those engaged in the cultural non-governmental field. To learn from actors in the public tourism field, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the city government representatives<sup>4</sup>. Their views were recorded and analyzed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their attitudes towards tourism as an activity, as well of the issues influencing their relationships with the non-governmental cultural field. The process of inductive content analysis was used to analyze the data. The interviewees' responses were coded relying on Nvivo coding across interviews to describe and illustrate emergent themes. By extracting understandings and experiences of interviewees, a sketching of the public sector narrative regarding tourism policy was produced.

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<sup>2</sup> EXIT festival is an international festival that started as a student's movement against Milošević's regime in 1999. Now, after almost twenty years of its existence, it lost its socio-political connotation and became a regular commercial international festival.

<sup>3</sup> Multiculturalism is a feature that Novi Sad likes to promote, since this area once was a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and a number of minorities still live here (besides Serbs, there are Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenians, Jews and others, altogether there are more than twenty nations).

<sup>4</sup> City Council member for the economy, deputy director of the Tourist Organization of Novi Sad, associate in the administration of the city administration responsible for the economy in the field of tourism and two members of the Tourism council.

The interviewees from the city government were asked about the main postulates of the tourism policy and the role of the civil-society organizations in the tourism offer. General findings illustrate that the policies are growth oriented. Government representatives do not see the current civil society organizations and individuals as being in the tourism industry, but can imagine their place through economic activity, believing that the individual who begins to engage in the arts should bring material benefit to the community – through income and employment. This illustrates the prevalence of a neoliberal approach to tourism that ignores other value (social, cultural, political, environmental etc.) that tourism can produce.

*The market regulates everything, everything should be left to the market, it will show what goes, (Associate in the city administration responsible for the economy and tourism).*

In this context government representative states that one of the potential solutions to include civil society organizations and individuals lies in the ‘creative industries’ sector which may contribute to the image of Novi Sad as a creative city. In order to support this idea an ‘Action plan for creative industries’ was created in 2015, with the aim to help the ‘*small ones*’.

*They will be able to commercialize what they know, whether through education, or through financial support, the idea is to help people so that they can make a living out of that, to monetize their knowledge and skills, (a member of the City Council for Economy).*

The Deputy Director of the Tourist Organization of Novi Sad was more favorable about the inclusion of non-governmental cultural organizations into tourism planning. He calls them *small, highly valuable jewels*, and considers the possibility to include them in the tourist offer. He believes that the main problems are loss of trust, poor communication, lack of knowledge and disregard of the independent scene which all account for this misunderstanding.

Standing on the opposite side of the tourism spectrum, the cultural field, therefore, has a different perspective about tourism, since their main purpose does not have a profit-orientation. A public field in culture aims at taking care of cultural heritage preservation and promotion, providing support for contemporary artistic production and cultural institutions, covering the wider social interest of the citizens’ cultural emancipation. The non-governmental cultural sector aims at providing content that is different from the one in public institutions. They promote more progressive and dynamic cultural practices combining different means of expressions. Sometimes they advocate improvement of working conditions in the cultural field, or embrace a wider agenda of socially engaged questions (gender equality, ecology, youth or crime issues etc.). The main problem of non-governmental organizations is a constant lack of financial means which disrupts the execution of their programs. They are highly dependent on the public purse as a means of financing<sup>5</sup> (city, province, state), where they apply for funding based on particular projects.

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<sup>5</sup> 70 percent of all NGOs are financed by public means (Tomka, Volić, Cvetičanin, 2016).

In order to gather data from actors operating in the non-governmental cultural field, a focus group with members of non-governmental organizations<sup>6</sup> was conducted. Their views were recorded and analyzed with the aim to gain an in-depth understanding of the way they perceive their representation in tourism field, and assess the possibilities to cooperate with the public tourism sector. The process of inductive content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The focus group participants' responses were coded relying on in Nvivo coding across their individual answers to describe and illustrate emergent themes. By extracting understandings and experiences of the focus group participants, key guidelines for a non-governmental cultural sector narrative regarding tourism as an activity were created.

When talking about their representation through tourism, non-governmental cultural representatives believe they are invisible in both the tourist and cultural offer of the City, although they think their creative work might be a part of the tourist offer. In this regard, they wonder whether their performance and creativity is generally of interest to the city policy makers. Also they feel that they should get involved in the tourism offer with their work because they all have specific features to offer – such as circus performances and conventions, musical multimedia content through the exhibition of art and self-published books, educational architecture children's camp, theater and performance. At the beginning of the talk, some of the informants could not see how they could engage in tourism, but as the conversation was unfolding they realized that their creative activities could be of interest to visitors. In this sense, they became aware that their offer could attract a very small market segment; however, considering their limited spatial and human capacities, even a narrow segment would suffice to make their activities viable.

The key themes that concerned the non-governmental cultural representatives were lack of resources, space and promotion of their content. Since funding mechanisms are slow, and they cannot plan the program in advance, a great uncertainty in the planning of the program remains. Non-governmental cultural representatives are highly resistant to public cultural field, blaming them of being ineffective and slow. It seems that there is a vicious circle of mistrust within the NGOs, leaving them unable to think about possible solutions that can provide alternative funding sources and visibility.

When asked about contributing to City tourism policy, respondents reacted positively, but they could not see themselves contributing to tourism policy without cultural policy being established.

*The problem is with the cultural policy – once it is defined, the tourist offer will develop by itself. As soon as artistic production starts, it will immediately attract guests, (multimedia art respondent).*

With respect to tourism, the respondents see development of this field as haphazard and 'ad hoc' and they are uncertain of what the aim of tourism policy is. Informants want to be visible and included in the official presentation of the tourist offer of Novi Sad, but not under the current conditions (outdated approach, obsolete data and design).

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<sup>6</sup> Their areas of activity included architecture, non-formal education of children and youth, new media, electronic music, design and education of youth, circus arts, performances, social theater, self-publishing, multimedia art and gallery exhibiting.



*In this 'status quo' condition, I would not recommend anyone to promote themselves through the Tourist Organization of Novi Sad, (self-publishing respondent).*

They find it is important to disseminate information about the tourist offer - in hotels, hostels, at information points and think that now there is not enough information about what is happening. Respondents think that it seems that the current offer is customized for tourists with guides who are coming with agencies, but not for independent tourists, whose number is much higher.

During the interview, the story always came back to the problems of uncertainty in funding, lack of resources and space for creative work and its presentation.

*If we had our own working space, there would be more opportunities for 'word of mouth' advertising, so the visitors would know where to come to see our production, (circus arts respondent).*

Most informants do not have space for production and presentation of their work, which impacts upon their visibility in the destination. This was seen as a threat to their existence and survival.

### **Towards discussion, inclusion and more power in tourism decision making**

Without a doubt, the current sources of power within the dominant tourism planning process lie within city government, and more precisely, within the economic development department. By creating the optimal tourism product adapted to an average European consumer, government members are supporting the approach of presenting dominant historical narratives and buildings, leaving complete contemporary urban artistic and cultural expressions aside. By marginalizing current expressions and an alternative cultural scene, a city image which is deprived of its meaning is being created.

Those who are in the position of creating contemporary culture and arts are being marginalized and left behind from tourism and cultural policy creation. By perpetuating this practice, this segment is being constantly disempowered and struggling for its survival. Knowing that power is not fixed nor unchangeable, the question of how to empower cultural actors could be raised. One strategy could be their inclusion in the tourism offer, maybe through independent means of sales and promotion (e.g. alternative routes, local events etc.). Inclusion in tourism could provide them with an alternative source of financing which could reduce their dependency on public funds. By becoming a more recognizable agent in the field and raising their representation *through* tourism, non-governmental cultural organizations would increase their negotiating power for representation *in* tourism. In other words, cultural organizations may be involved in decision-making processes (e.g. for the allocation of resources). A key issue between those two sectors is a lack of trust, poor communication, a lack of knowledge and mutual disregard. The main challenge will consist of bringing these agents around the same table where they will be able to communicate, interact and negotiate.

Lastly, in order to raise visibility and inclusion of all actors that want to be presented either *in* or *through* tourism, there should be constant negotiation, renegotiation and contesting of existing relations. Non-governmental organizations, in order to be equal negotiators, should first empower themselves and firmly set their agenda for functioning, artistically and in terms of tourism. Possible activities on the public policy level would be inter-department cooperation of tourism and culture. By reflecting on what is being represented through tourism and challenging dominant narratives and presentations, a firmer, more contemporary and diverse tourism agenda could be established. This agenda should make space for the vivid cultural field of non-governmental cultural organizations, whereby fostering diversity, which should be a core value of the city of Novi Sad. Finally, if we move just a bit towards widening current cultural tourism representations, we may get closer to transforming planning practices that rely on meaning making, and which are constantly being questioned and negotiated. Those processes could be a starting point for more dynamic, interactive and equitable city tourism policies.

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# **Alice's Wonderment in Tourism Land: Two Tales of Innovation**

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## **Prologue**

I beg your indulgence to tell an unconventional tale – a tale about tales or more accurately, a tale of tales retold. Names have been changed to protect the innocent; all else is as real as subjective human existence permits. So it is neither a story of fact nor fiction but a construction (Pernecky, 2012), as “even the simplest narratives are” (de Montoya, 2004, p. 77).

The protagonist is an inquisitive researcher named Alice. The moniker is a nod to the heroine of the 1865 fantasy novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* written by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll (Carroll, 1866). *That* Alice falls down a rabbit hole into a strange world inhabited by odd anthropomorphic creatures, whereupon she undertakes a fantastic sense-making journey. As a prime example of the literary nonsense genre (Lecerle, 2012), it aptly resembles the work of social science wherein researchers explore peculiar social worlds and strive to make sense of it all.

*This* Alice falls into the strange world of tourism; whereupon she meets rather odd creatures – tourism entrepreneurs that have managed rare feats of innovation. Each tells her a fantastic tale. However, “tales have to tell themselves” (Smith & Anderson, 2004, p. 142); so rather than revealing the end at the start, it behoves me to ask that you take the roundabout path by joining Alice in her journey.

## **A Beginning**

One day Alice developed an interest in tourism innovation. It all started when she noticed that innovation had become topical. Billed as “the lifeblood of most successful modern businesses” (Tourism Victoria, 2014b) and “the only way to stay in business” (TTNQ, 2015), innovation was the new ‘Holy Grail’. News stories (Sherry, 2015), industry conferences (TTNQ, 2015), awards (QTIC, 2014, 2015; UNWTO, 2015), government websites (Tourism Victoria, 2014a, 2014b) and policy (e.g. OECD, 2006; OECD, 2010; RET, 2009a, 2009b) extolled the virtues of innovation and exhorted firms to innovate.

So Alice next did what any researcher tended to - she dived into the literature. Here, and rather to her surprise, she found the industry fervour for innovation had some basis in academic thought. Learned people said innovation was good for firms and the economic systems they inhabited (e.g. see Drucker, 1985, 2002; Johannessen, Olsen, & Lumpkin, 2001; Porter, 1990; Schumpeter, 1934; Tidd & Bessant, 2013b); and pundits presented Porter's proclamation that "Companies achieve competitive advantage through acts of innovation" (1990, p. 74).

However, Alice detected a note of caution too: innovation was "disruptive, risky and costly" (Tidd & Bessant, 2013b, p. 109); the process was "fraught with uncertainty" (OECD, 2005, p. 30) and the effort "could cost many resources, which could be wasted" (Sundbo, 2002, p. 66). Firms could even "innovate *and* die" (Hall & Williams, 2008, p. 29)! Now Alice started to wonder if innovation was more trouble than it was worth.

Still, many said innovation was needed to survive in tourism (e.g. Cooper, 2006; Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2010; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2010; Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes, & Sørensen, 2007; Weidenfeld, Williams, & Butler, 2010). Experts pointed out that innovation was "crucial to the establishment, growth and survival of firms" (Hall & Williams, 2008, p. 24). By now, Alice was thinking that *not* innovating was the path to business ruin!

With *that* last dire prognosis in mind, she set out to find a cure. Alas, she trod a ramshackle path: although innovation research was well advanced in manufacturing where "innovation theory has its roots" (Drejer, 2004, p. 551) it was a lot less advanced in tourism (Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2010; Sipe & Testa, 2009; Sundbo et al., 2007). So it seemed that neither the meaning nor means of tourism innovation was clear (Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 1994, 2002, 2009, 2010; Sipe & Testa, 2009). Alice wondered if innovation might be a 'buzzword' like Hjalager (2010, p. 1) said. Gloomily, she pondered the possibility that the industry quest for innovation was a 'fool's errand'; leastways, chasing something without knowing what it was seemed to be a foolish thing to do!

Alice rightly reckoned that to find *anything* you had to know what it was. So she determined to nut out what 'innovation' was. It proved a tough nut though: most definitions focussed on "newness" (Johannessen et al., 2001, p. 20) and novelty (Slappendel, 1996, p. 107); as one sage said, "all innovations must contain a degree of novelty" (OECD, 2005, p. 57). '*That didn't sound very helpful*', thought Alice as she tried to imagine what 'novelty' looked like. She mused that it was mainly a matter of perspective: novelty was "in the eye of the beholder" (Tidd & Bessant, 2013b, p. 30) so innovations could be 'new-to-the-firm', 'new-to-the-market' or 'new-to-the-world' (OECD, 2005; Tidd & Bessant, 2013b).

Innovation was a process with at least two parts too: creativity/invention *and* implementation/exploitation (e.g. Damanpour, 1996; Fuglsang & Sundbo, 2002; Hjalager, 2002, 2010; Hjalager, Cooper, & Lockwood, 1994; Kanter, 1996; Sundbo, 2002; Tidd & Bessant, 2013b; Unsworth & Parker, 2003). ‘*Well, that settled that!*’ thought Alice, rather pleased to be making some progress at last: innovation existed when ‘novelty’ was put into effect; new-to-firm innovation was “the minimum entry level” (OECD, 2005, p. 57); and an innovative firm had “implemented at least one innovation” (OECD, 2005, p. 58)!

Now Alice could turn to ‘how’. Alas, the explanations spanned the gamut of structure and agency - from individuals to organisations to the institutional frameworks surrounding their sum (Damanpour, 1996; Hjalager, 2009; Johannessen et al., 2001; Sundbo et al., 2007). People discussed “systems of innovation” (Edquist, 2005; Hjalager, 2009; Sundbo et al., 2007), networks (Liburd, Carlsen, & Edwards, 2013; Novelli, Schmitz, & Spencer, 2006; Sundbo et al., 2007), knowledge flows (Weidenfeld et al., 2010), workplace behaviour (e.g. West & Altink, 1996; West & Farr, 1990) and organisation conditions too (Kanter, 1996; Tidd & Bessant, 2013a). Alice’s head spun! She found the different perspectives interesting but “being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing” (Carroll, 1866, p. 60)! ‘*How to look at it?*’ she wondered. Thankfully, at that moment she remembered innovation was “fundamentally about entrepreneurship” (Tidd & Bessant, 2013b, p. 8) – it happened when entrepreneurs implemented new ideas (e.g. Drucker, 1985; Drucker, 2002; Kanter, 1996; Schumpeter, 1934; Tidd & Bessant, 2013b).

Then Alice encountered a curious contradiction: although tourism was “a phenomenon characterized by immense innovativeness” (Hjalager, 2010, p. 1), most firms were *not* very innovative (Hjalager, 2002, 2010; Sundbo et al., 2007; Weidenfeld et al., 2010). It was a puzzling puzzle and Alice pondered the possibility of something peculiar about innovative firms. The question was ‘*How to find out?*’ Alice determined to find some innovative tourism firms and ask people ‘in-the-know’; though rare as they were the problem was ‘*How to find them?*’ Then, she struck upon an idea: ‘*Ask people in firms that had won awards for innovation!*’ And *that* was how she met Jenny and John. By asking each a few questions (a semi-structured interview) two terrific tales she was told...

## Two Terrific Tales

### *The Tale of John*

John's story started back when he was 21: *"I worked in construction and I had my own business building wharves and bridges"*. One day John was asked to lead a project to construct an adventure climb on a bridge. Although he worked on the technical side, he found himself *"more interested in the tourism side"*; so he started *"looking around [the city] to see if I could identify any other opportunities for tourism"*. He *"just wanted to move from construction into tourism"* as he liked the interaction with people and the opportunity to travel to meet people: *"rather than being stuck in that hard grind of construction. I suppose I saw it as more of a special type of career."*

John thought that the biggest two assets were the river and the cliffs: *"the biggest and best asset that I had identified was the [river]. We also had the [cliffs] and...I realised that it was very difficult to organise any climbing or abseiling or any kind of activity on that cliff as an individual or traveller. And with the river, there didn't seem to be anywhere close to town where you could hire kayaks or go out on a tour"*. So John decided to bring outdoor adventure into the city: *"I just wanted to come up with a concept that would allow people to enjoy the beauty of [city] and the river's edge and just be 'one with the outside'"*. So in 2005, he started a business providing activities on the river and the cliffs. That kindled his interest in height activities: *"I really started to enjoy the climbing side of things and the aerial side."* Later, John expanded to a nearby resort island: *"And we had also then started business opportunities out at [island resort]...diving, parasailing, all the water sports on the island...Segway on the beach, massage and beauty, eco-marine tours."*

One day, a cruise ship operator asked John to develop some concepts for their ships: *"they wanted something new on their ships because the cruise industry was becoming very, very competitive; so they approached me and said 'look can you come up with some ideas for our ship"*. They had noticed what John had been doing and his technical skills suited their needs: *"I was quite fortunate...having a marine background... and being a boilermaker...I also have another degree which allows me to design...so I was able to design, construct and also operate...they were interested in all three so it was a really good fit"*. As John recalls, the cruise line management basically said: *"we'll put you on a couple of cruises and give you a number of months to have a look around and present to us how you think an adventure*

*activity program would fit with these particular ships*". So John visited each of the ships to watch the passengers, talk with the crew and formulate some concepts.

Safety proved to be the biggest challenge: *"the largest challenge was convincing the Captain and the ship's staff that it's a good idea to create something...that has the ability to add to the list of risks and accidents on board"*. Safety was also a concern for the senior management: *"to make sure there wasn't anything in there that customers or passengers might have perceived as being not safe working practices"*. John's acumen helped allay these concerns, *"it was a matter of making them feel at ease with the good safety record I have in my other businesses"*. The incorporation of relevant technology helped too: *"there had been some advances in technology, in safety... like automatic belay systems"*. John knew this from his 'fact finding' missions: *"I travel the world each year looking at different systems and different places, making sure that if there's anything new and available that I can grab it"*

The implementation of the project was relatively straightforward - *"it was similar to the product I put together with [the island resort]"*. As well, from his businesses on the island John had experience with some customers the cruise line had: *"I know that market, I know what they want, and I feel confident I can deliver for them"*.

Using the ship's architecture John managed to deliver over 20 unique, fun and challenge activities for cruise ship passengers, effectively turning each ship into an adventure park at sea. An impeccable safety record was achieved: *"you couldn't count on one hand the number of minor injuries that have happened...so the ship is happy because the passengers are happy."* The success led to the extension to other ships and each time it was easier: *"with each ship, the challenges become less and less and I've learned a lot as we've delivered on each ship so they become easier and easier"*. In 2014 John won accolade for the innovation of providing new types of adventure products on cruise ships.

### ***The Tale of Jenny***

It began 15 years ago when *"another Marine Biologist (Paul)... and I were asked to look after a turtle by the government. Jenny, a veterinarian and a qualified marine biologist, was happy to help because she cared about the plight of the turtles. So Jenny and Paul found an old aquarium they could use, but it was a temporary arrangement; so they needed to find a permanent facility. One day, a local businessman decided to let her use a building in town so she could continue her work, and so it went on there: "we used to get 4-5 turtles every year...just the two of us doing it, we got another couple of volunteers on board and we got a*



*few more turtles over the years*". Everything went along nicely until a calamity struck – freakish weather destroyed the inshore turtle habitat and caused mass turtle stranding: *"the inshore sea grass beds...were actually wiped out so we had mass stranding of thousands of green sea turtles"*. There were far too many sick turtles for Jenny's small operation. Many turtles died.

Jenny determined to find a bigger facility then, but it was only an idea – without money or a site she no way to make it happen. One day, another local businessman said Jenny could use some land on a nearby island, *"and so the idea was hatched that we build over there"*. Jenny had no money so *"it was whatever we could beg or borrow"*. Jenny and Paul started clearing the land by hand.

Before long others joined in: *"we were really lucky.... We had another four people come over"*. Then a chance meeting with a local politician delivered vital equipment: *"One day I ran into [politician] and I said... "We really need your help" And he said, "Ok what do you need?" And I said "A Bobcat would be great" ...and on the barge next week was a Bobcat! That made a lot of difference..."* It was still hard: *"we battled, we really battled, we really did it tough, and we ran out of money so many times*. The effort was worth it because the endangered turtles *"needed somebody to look after them"*. Many people in the local community regarded the turtles as a barometer of the health reef, which was a major tourist drawcard: *"turtles are indicators of the [reef] - if you've got sick turtles you've got a sick reef"*.

One day the media did a story about it: *"I think I did a bit of TV and I think I said, you know, we really need [workers and tradespeople] ...and we had people with hands up left, right and centre"*. From then on, when she needed help she would contact the media or put an advertisement in the newspaper, bringing astonishing results: *"plumbers and electricians...and carpenters....they would ring up and say 'We'd love to come and help, what can we do?'"* And that was how the facility was completed. Once the turtle rehabilitation aspect was running smoothly Jenny started the tours. The tours became popular: *"now we have people that come over on the boat...just to see the turtles"*. More students and researchers visited too: *"now I have university students from all around the world and also from interstate in Australia...vet students, ecology students, conservation students...."*

The community continued to support it: *"The tourism bodies... are fabulous to us... they pick up turtles things like that... sponsor turtles...and all our volunteers travel free of charge"*. The volunteer network has grown too: *"they're absolutely fantastic...they give up a*

*day of their life every week to come out and help*". The local federal politician even started talking about "*building a purpose built threatened species centre...so we can actually have a true educational centre...with a research component as well*".

In 2014 Jenny won industry accolade for innovatively combining tourism with a turtle rehabilitation program. It delivered a win-win-win: a memorable turtle experience for visitors; an educational message encouraging conservation behaviour; and funds to support the rehabilitation work and conservation research.

## **An End**

To Alice, each story was fascinating: Jenny and John had each somehow managed to do something innovative. In a way, each story followed the plot of the Quest (Kent, 2015), wherein "some major incident" sparks a search for a "person, place, or thing" (2015, p. 486) and in which the action traces three parts: uncertain start, stern challenges and the finale of the questors' triumphant win. Something had inspired Jenny and John to set out after an idea not knowing exactly how it might turn out: John did not know what the activities on the ships might be; and Jenny had a vision but barely knew where to start! Each searched for answers as they went, encountering twists and turns that shaped how it turned out. Each faced stern challenges: John faced tough questions about passenger risk, and Jenny just "battled and battled". Somehow they triumphed and brought their ideas to life.

Of course, Alice realized each story was more than an entertaining tale – as situated local accounts, the stories depicted the messy, real-life practice of entrepreneurship (de Montoya, 2004). The entrepreneurial tales, or "e-tales" (Smith & Anderson, 2004) were sense-making and sense-giving (de Montoya, 2004; Foss, 2004; Rae, 2000; Smith & Anderson, 2004). The question was: *what sense could she make of it?*

One thing Alice noticed was that Jenny and John managed to get all the resources they needed, though the ways and means they used differed: John had ample internal resources, but Jenny needed lots of outside help. Both had help from others, but that varied too: for Jenny, external relations (media, political and business) furnished many vital resources; but John relied on only a few relationships (senior management and shipboard staff) to craft and implement the idea. Alice supposed these stories jibed with the idea that networks aided innovation in tourism firms (Liburd et al., 2013; Sundbo et al., 2007). However, Alice noticed something else too: in each story the entrepreneurs *adapted* to the situation, using certain relationships to get just what they needed.

It was said that knowledge was helpful to tourism innovation (Hjalager, 2002, 2009, 2010; Liburd et al., 2013; OECD, 2005, 2006, 2010) and Alice could see this in the stories too. John habitually went on fact-finding missions – a case of observation/imitation of distant, similar products/attractions like Weidenfeld et al. (2010) said. John was a “knowledge transfer agent” (Weidenfeld et al., 2010) building “knowledge stocks” (Weidenfeld et al., 2010). Jenny, however, did not seek external product knowledge because she already knew what facility was needed - her internal “knowledge stock” was enough. So Alice noticed that adaptability again: somehow they both *knew* what knowledge was needed *and* how to fill in the gaps.

The adaptability struck Alice as strikingly similar – be it resources, relationships or knowledge, they just seemed to know just what was needed and how to get it too. Perhaps it was not all that surprising. As de Montoya (2004, p. 59) said; “even the most benign of business environments is constantly in flux” so entrepreneurs must be able to “process the events that flow around them”. So the fact that adaptability was present and needed was not at issue – the quintessential question for Alice was “*How?*”

Alice reflected that Jenny and John each seemed to have an in-depth understanding of their realm. As a vet and marine biologist with long experience in running a turtle rehabilitation facility, Jenny was able to conceive a new facility including education and tours; and John’s skills in construction, design and rope activities had equipped him to design such activities on cruise ships. Alice noticed that passion had helped each to see and seize opportunities that others somehow missed; the passion was longstanding too: John had enjoyed heights and outdoor activities for 20 years and Jenny had been involved in turtle rehabilitation for more than 15 years. Soon Alice sensed a starting point: perhaps it was the passion that fuelled the acquisition of the knowledge that enabled the innovation quest! Alice then remembered that perceived risk was a known barrier to innovation; still, innovators continued anyway. That gave her an idea that made some sense: that accumulated knowledge conferred both the ability understand risks and the ‘know-how’ to address them. Armed with that in-depth knowledge, they could formulate ideas and realise them – by adapting to the situation at hand

It seemed to Alice that the moral of the story was that they succeeded because they knew a great deal about what they were doing - they understood their innovation arena. They had built this knowledge over time and that accumulated stock of knowledge enabled them to take the next step forward, to do something new. That habit of learning is what had made them masters of their art.

The stories now took a new prosaic turn. They were not just a plot of Quest, but a plot of Discovery too (Kent, 2015): a tale about how entrepreneurs choose to live or make a living (de Montoya, 2004), about being open to possibility and learning along the way. Perhaps, in the end, mused Alice, it was a story of “becoming” (Foss, 2004), or of incremental innovation at personal scale. Alice thought her namesake summed the wider story nicely thus:

*“Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, that’s the great puzzle!”* (Carroll, 1866, p. 19)

At least that was one way to look at it, thought Alice. After all, as a tale about tales describing “the chaos of life” (de Montoya, 2004, p. 75) it was always going to be “a new story, a new construction, bearing some resemblance to what might be ‘out there’ in the world, ever unfolding, and inviting interpretation.” (de Montoya, 2004, pp. 77-78) Not really *the* end then, but *an* end.

## **Afterword**

Narratives offer a way to make sense of entrepreneurship (de Montoya, 2004; Foss, 2004; Rae, 2000; Smith & Anderson, 2004), including the entrepreneurial activity of innovation (Drucker, 1985). Stories are a basic form of human communication (Kent, 2015; Rae, 2000). As Kent (2015, p. 488) says: “the idea of humans as “homonarrans” or story telling animals is well established”. Narratives “are a central means of communicating the entrepreneurial message” (Smith & Anderson, 2004, p. 126) and the messy stories of entrepreneurship (de Montoya, 2004; Smith & Anderson, 2004) trace well-known master plots that describe the stories of life (Kent, 2015).

A prosaic view of entrepreneurship invites contemplation of sense-giving forms too (Steyaert, 2004). As Steyaert (2004, p. 21) puts it: “To draw upon the novel to conceive entrepreneurship is then to acknowledge the similar authorship the writing of life presupposes as in literary writing. The question is then: What forms, genres and styles of writing can become implied here?”

The research story boils down to the notion that if questions are sufficiently intriguing to merit research then the answers might be useful for others to know. Institutional scholars have long said as much in grounding the research effort in the basic premise that universities exist to disseminate knowledge to society (e.g. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1967; PhillipsKPA, 2006; Roper & Hirth, 2005; Ticha & Havlicek, 2008). Perhaps a more relatable version is that researchers like asking questions and telling others about the answers that they find. Yet, the language and form of academic writing remain exclusive - legible only to those that are 'in-the-know'.

The sense-giving power of a story depends on the way it is told (Kent, 2015). Popular literature is entertaining and relatable; yet although social science researchers study the eminently relatable subject of the social world, the stories are rarely so. Where are the entertaining stories about social life and the characters that comprise it? Research has all the ingredients for a tale of Discovery – a burning question, a search for answers and a resolution of sorts. However, as the Discovery plot “answers life's questions using characters and situations that seem real and concrete” (Kent, 2015, p. 485) the question beckons: *Where is the researcher – the main character in the research story?* Perhaps this could be a way to make the entrepreneurship research story more entertaining and relatable; and respond, in some measure, to Steyaert's call for moving to “a more prosaic scene” (2004, p. 2).

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Building our stories:  
*Co-creating tourism futures in research*

## Abstract Submissions



## **Exploring tourism futures – A phronetic approach**

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In recent years, the tourism industry in Greenland has experienced growing political and societal interest as means for Greenland's future economic development. In order to attract more international tourists, several infrastructure and marketing strategies and initiatives have been set in place aiming above all to stimulate cruise tourism and establish transatlantic airports. Less activity is committed to understanding how actors on the ground see tourism and how they think tourism should be organized and developed in - and for – Greenland.

This paper explores a recent research project which engaged with tourism futures by mapping out the tourism landscape in Greenland from a practice perspective. The aim was to open up for new insights into where tourism development is going and how tourism actors are working to get there.

By exploring the current landscape and possible tourism futures of Greenland, we draw upon Aristotelian notion of 'phronesis'. As Aristotle terms it, 'phronesis' is the practical wisdom, practical judgement, common sense, or prudence "that comes from an intimate familiarity with the contingencies and uncertainties of any particular social practice" (Schram, 2012, p. 15).

For Flyvbjerg (2001), phronetic research is a research approach which produces "experience in context as the most appropriate means of generating knowledge that matches social priorities and can contribute to public debate" (Thomas, 2012, p. 2). By communicating the results of the research to and incorporating feedback from the public, the derived understanding and knowledge build the ground for clarifying practice, sometimes intervening into it, sometimes generating new perspectives, but always serving as eyes and ears in an ongoing effort to understand the present and to deliberate about the future (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Accordingly, phronetic research focuses on practical activities and practical knowledge in everyday life situations and thereby aims to explore current practice as well as historic circumstances in order to find ways to understand practice (Dredge, 2011).

### **Exploration through phronesis – the research of practice?**

In the case of Greenland, ‘phronesis’ is used as a lens for exploring, providing insights into and creating a better understanding of the current tourism landscape in Greenland by focusing on the specific challenges, needs and resources of tourism actors in their day-to-day work at the destination level. A phronetic approach generates situated knowledge that explores context-specific social priorities and contributes to public debate (Flyvbjerg, 2001). This is done through case narratives which provide and act as examples of ongoing tourism development in Greenland. The case narratives are not only helpful to clarify the complexity of tourism and its development, but also to show how tourism takes place on the ground and how tourism unfolds in collaboration between diverse actors.

In the present project entitled ‘Tourism Development in Greenland – Identification and Inspiration’ (Ren & Chimirri, 2017), we aimed to get a more thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the tourism sector and to gain a knowledge-based appreciation of its composition, its organization and existing collaborations. The project ran from November 2016 until March 2017 and provided insights into the tourism landscape in Greenland based on extensive fieldwork.

In the initial phase of the project, we explored the tourism landscape in Greenland through a review of the existing research literature, reports and material from the public sector, such as Greenland's Statistics, Naalakkersuisut/Government of Greenland, VisitGreenland, and online research of tourism stakeholders. This first step offered insights and an overall understanding of the current status of the tourism landscape in Greenland. Based on this desk research, relevant actors were identified, contacted via email and asked to participate in this project by sharing their knowledge with us. On the basis of the answers to our inquiry, we decided to focus on the four largest destinations on the west coast of Greenland: Kangerlussuaq, Sisimiut, Ilulissat and Nuuk. The resulting data collection includes a total of 23 interviews with tourism actors in Denmark and

### **Emerging topics and discussions**

Following a mainly qualitative approach, the tourism landscape was explored by a practitioner’s perspective. Based on the conducted interviews it provided hands-on knowledge that can be used to further successfully develop Greenland as tourism destination. Through the use of ‘phronesis’ and narratives we were able to frame issues other than the “usual”

discussions on infrastructure and policy in Greenlandic tourism development, such as education, entrepreneurship and collaboration.

The research findings were communicated first in form of the report and subsequently during a symposium, taking place at the end of the project in March 2017. Apart from presenting the narratives of education, entrepreneurship and collaboration, workshop sessions were conducted where participants of the symposium discussed these core insights. By communicating the results and fostering a frame for discussion, the generated and emerging knowledge enabled actors in the field to reengage with the issues which they are confronted with and discuss tourism futures for Greenland.

In spite of the limited time of the initial project, the results of the project were fed back into public discussion through the written report as well as the final symposium. In the spirit of Flyvbjerg (2004), it was able to redirect attention from often locked discussions on infrastructure to on-the-ground challenges and helped instigate discussions of (other possible) visions for the future of tourism development by focusing on the potential of existing collaboration as resource for developing tourism.

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## **Student feedback: story-telling and achievement in postgraduate student teaching**

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Feedback is considered to be an important part of good teaching, as well as ‘one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement’ (Hattie & Timperley 2007, p.81, Jonsson 2012). Apart from simply being an interaction between student and teacher, feedback is also ‘an interface between teachers’ pedagogical goals; students’ learning needs; and institutional and governmental education policies, which structure and regulate practices and procedures’ (Bailey & Garner 2010, p.188). Tian & Lowe (2013, p. 580) also add that the role of feedback in cross-cultural learning ‘is not only a part of the new academic culture itself, but can act as a bridge between norms, rules and practices of the two cultures’.

In the last two decades there has been growing interest in the subject of feedback however few recent studies have investigated the role feedback plays in the education of postgraduate (PG) coursework students, especially international students. Also, while there has been a great deal of research relating to the student experience of feedback generally, there remains an important gap regarding the experiences of higher education teachers working with international students. This scoping study aims to explore the role of feedback in PG tourism teaching, academics’ experiences and views towards using feedback in PG tourism teaching, as well as identify approaches academics use to achieve feedback success.

The paper draws on data collected for a previous project which aimed to showcase the voices of teaching staff working with international postgraduate coursework students in the Master of International Tourism and Hotel program at Southern Cross University. It is proposed that further data will subsequently be collected from both teachers and students with a specific focus on the issue of feedback.

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## **TEFI Tales: Choosing between the Banality of Neoliberal Higher Education or Political Activism**

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This is a TEFI tale. It is a tale of TEFI's becoming as a scholarly community and its quest to shape a space for political action and to unlock the political potential of tourism scholars. The paper examines the formation of TEFI, how it has changed, and it raises questions about TEFI's future, and that of tourism higher education more generally, within the roll out of neoliberalism. Drawing from the works of Hannah Arendt, herself both a storyteller and political theorist, the paper prompts conference participants to consider what language they use to describe themselves as scholars, as change makers, as teachers and learners themselves. Arendt argues that we become through language. If this is so, what language describes what we stand for and what we seek to become? In this presentation, as we follow Arendt's work on political activism, we also question whether the bureaucratization of neoliberal higher education is a threat or an opportunity. Moreover, does this perception of threat/opportunity change our language in terms of what we seek to become?

This paper begins with the story of Hannah Arendt. Arendt's early works interrogate her own becoming. She was a Jew who did not particularly identify as such during her childhood, but her relationship with Heidegger (and his turn toward anti-Semitism) triggered her philosophical interest in how one becomes through processes of thinking and in language. Fleeing to the US in 1941, Arendt secured work in the post-war period as a reporter covering the Nuremberg trials, where she went on to explore the banality of evil in the *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In this period, she became a particularly controversial character wherein she drew much criticism for her explorations of why seemingly decent people do evil things. In her later work, *Life of the Mind*, she explores the importance of political spaces, and the need to preserve the spaces of participation and dissent that are needed in order to create optimism and new paths for a better world. Fast forward 50 or more years, and given troubling claims that totalitarianism is re-emerging in various political systems across the world, it is not surprising that Arendt's work is currently undergoing an renaissance.

Threaded through Arendt's diverse works there is a consistent thread of politics and political action, an optimistic belief in participation, in the need for individuals to be political, and in the importance of spaces of dialogue and civic action. In Arendt's view, the importance

of maintaining spaces of activism were especially important for a flourishing civil society. This is where the story of TEFI starts. TEFI is a space of activism and critical engagement, a space where dissent is not only important but necessary, and where tourism education can become something else by focusing on language. Arendt's life, works and philosophical threads are used in this presentation to weave together a discussion of TEFI, its past, its present and its future.

The Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) is a scholarly network that is now 10 years old. Borne out of a need to address the seismic shifts taking place in tourism, TEFI was originally formed to address the founders' perceived need to link critical research with tourism education. Its original language and approach was scientific rational and modernist in its undertones. TEFI founders marked their place on the landscape with a manifesto about the importance of values in education and they set about creating a space of engagement and change-making. In 2013 the new energy emerged under a change of leadership and the language changed to reflect a postmodern and post-structural discourse about education, values-based education, and the network itself as a tool for organising and driving change.

Drawing upon Arendt, the moral of this story is that how we think of ourselves as scholars, teachers and learners establishes who we are. It is this conversation, and how we describe and establish ourselves through language, that determines whether we engage as political actors to shape the space in which tourism education takes place. Through interactive activities, this presentation will engage participants in reflecting upon their becoming and what TEFI, as a space of political engagement, dissent and reframing, can mean in the future.

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## **Using Tourists' stories to understand the appropriation process of a holiday context**

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The experience is a very complex process whereby providers and consumers co-construct the elements that will lead to a satisfying and memorable experience. This co-construction process needs to be investigated further from the consumer perspective. Investigating the stories that emerge from consumers is an approach that is developed in this study in order to analyse and understand their appropriation process.

This article presents a study investigating how consumers bring their own story to their holiday. It is centered on the concept of practices and operant resources (De Souza Bispo, 2016; Prebensen and Xie, 2017) and more precisely on the notion of appropriation (Carù and Cova, 2007). Those analyses look at habitus and how consumers transfer their own habits to a new context and how they develop their own meaning in this new setting. The concept of appropriation investigates how consumers make sense of a new universe through three essential steps: nesting, exploration and stamping. Those steps are particularly interesting since they engage researchers to investigate the experience from the consumer perspective, analysing how consumers bring their own competencies and personal stories to the holiday context.

Investigating consumers in a tourism context calls for much creativity in terms of research techniques as it needs to compose with the complexity of accessing consumers at the right time, during their experience. Most often, researchers revert to a simpler approach: to investigate the experience in a post-consumption stage with various survey techniques, often on a quantitative basis. However, how the experience unfolds and its complexities can only be understood by investigating consumers at the very heart of their consumption. In this line of thought encouraging consumers to share the stories of their “tourist life” is a very rich approach as it allows researchers to get into consumers lives while on holiday and how they construct this new experience.

This study, conducted on a longitudinal basis, followed consumers throughout a week by interviewing them every evening of their stay. All the data were collected through semi-

structured interviews, recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The study was undertaken in an alpine ski resort and followed 16 groups of consumers, for a total of 86 participants.

The objective was to understand how consumers bring their own world and meaning to the experience by investigating the three appropriation steps. The first step looks at how consumers aim to develop a new home in their temporary setting (nesting): how they attempt to recreate the basis of a safe and pleasant home where the family/friends can reunite. The second step investigates the notion of exploration: tourists need to locate themselves within a new environment, understand where they are, where to find useful services and how to orientate themselves. The last step, stamping details how consumers bring their own meaning to an experience. Three elements are identified in this step: a meaning of self (humility called by the sheer mountainous magnitude), a meaning of the group (recreating a family unit, bonding, etc.) and a meaning of others (contacts with locals and other tourists).

This three-steps appropriation process is essential to produce a satisfying holiday experience. The results point to various managerial implications, that can be drawn from the visitors investigated. The paper offers a vision of co-creation as it can be inspired by consumers own practices and highlights its implications for resorts' management. Tourists' stories are extremely useful to understand the subtlety of consumers' experiences as Deschambault (2011) had already indicated. Moreover, stories are also a powerful tool to disseminate research findings towards actors. Through simple (and sometimes very mundane) stories, local actors can relate to the daily life of tourists and understand better necessary improvements that need to be undertaken alike Kent's analysis (2015) of the storytelling power in public relations.

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## **Corporate social responsibility learning through collaborative storytelling**

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a very popular teaching subject in management and tourism education. There is a wide stream of literature on pedagogical techniques that can be used to promote CSR learning (McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006). One of these techniques is storytelling (e.g. King and Down, 2001; Sims, 2004; Watson, 2003). For example, the telling of stories through movies, news-paper articles, guest speakers, educators, and the participation in field trips. Stories about people acting ethically and responsibly are viewed as suitable means for encouraging students to act ethically and to behave in admirable ways (Watson 2003). From this perspective, stories are seen as a way to show students what ideals and moral values look like in practice. While these scholars recognize the potential of storytelling in promoting CSR learning, they tend to focus on the telling of stories. By assuming that students learn from listening to the stories, this approach to storytelling assumes that student's learning is cognitivist in nature, based on their own experience, perceptions and conversations related to a particular historical event (Morgan and Dennehy, 2004; Weick, 1995). This cognitive approach is highly individualistic and therefore overlooks the value of stories as effective means of sharing knowledge, critically questioning assumptions, engaging in discursive practices, testing moral boundaries and making sense of perplexing situations (Gabriel and Connell, 2010; Gold et al., 2002).

The aim of this paper is to explore the possibilities and challenges of using stories as vehicles for critically evaluating contemporary business practices and testing the moral and political boundaries of CSR. In so doing, I argue that storytelling approaches to CSR learning should also recognize the role that the socially situated and discursive nature of stories as well as the collaborative practices and personal relations through which these stories are constructed may play in helping students in contesting, negotiating and (de-)constructing notions of responsibility (see Cunliffe, 2002). Drawing upon the relational social-constructionist orientation to business education (Cunliffe, 2002; Ramsey, 2005) and a collaborative storytelling approach to management learning (Gabriel and Connell, 2010), I discuss the co-construction of CSR stories by students as vehicles for critical reflexivity to unveil and question basic assumptions about the role of business in society.

Instead of viewing stories in terms of something to be communicated, I approach storytelling as a reflexive collaborative practice through which students and instructors receive the opportunity to (re)define their social identities, social worlds and social relations (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002). Although “critical thinking” is a term commonly used in relation to storytelling in CSR education to mean the ability to adopt a disciplined approach to problem solving, “critical reflexivity” refers to the social process of questioning assumptions embodied in both theory and professional practice (see Cunliffe, 2002). Critical reflexivity is particularly needed, if CSR educators really intend to promote intellectual pluralism that help recognize and discuss the taken-for-granted assumptions about the notion of responsibility.

The collaborative storytelling approach to CSR learning is illustrated by presenting findings from a study conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, Finland. The empirical data used in the study consist primarily of 12 CSR-stories co-constructed by students attending a Masters-level CSR course between the years 2011 and 2015. The CSR stories account for a total of 28 pages. Between 20 and 25 students representing different business fields (incl. tourism management) and nationalities attended the CSR course every year. The age of the students ranged from 23 to 35, and both genders were equally represented. 70% of the students have attended a course related to sustainability or business ethics before taking the CSR course used in this study. The co-creation of the stories occurred in groups of five or six students. The instructions given to the students for jointly writing the CSR stories were based on collaborative storytelling mechanism suggest by Gabriel and Connell (2010, p. 511).

The CSR-stories were analysed as social texts that are produced, shared and used in culturally specific and socially organized ways (see Moisander and Valtonen 2006, p. 68). To interpret the social texts constructed and deconstructed in the collaborative storytelling exercises, the study draws upon discourse analysis (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002). By analysing what students take for granted, what sorts of meanings they reinforce/contest and what they do not talk about in their CSR stories (Moisander and Valtonen 2006), discourse analysis helps identify the discursive practices that students may use to construct CSR meanings within a business educational context, giving them the opportunity to redefine or reinforce their managerial identity. From this perspective, the analysis does not focus simply on determining what the stories tell about social responsibility but rather how they socially represent CSR in a fictional narrative.

By focusing on the discursive nature of storytelling, it was possible to identify tensions and omissions in the CSR stories. Indeed, the stories did not represent texts that were shared

by a group of students but rather shared items that were used as a starting point for a negotiated narrative whose diverse meanings and silences could be challenged, contested and criticized (Gabriel and Connell 2010). Nevertheless, the critical evaluation of the stories is not possible by simply reading or listening to them. It is the actual engagement with the narratives and their deconstruction that are essential for consolidating reflexive practices in the classroom (Gherardi and Poggio 2007). To that end, unresolved tensions and taken-for-granted issues contained in the stories can be used as catalysts to engage students and instructors in reflexive dialogues.

In this study, these dialogues focused particularly on how managerialism, neo-colonialism and orientalism were used in the stories. They sought not only to make students aware of these discourses but also to enable them to critically evaluate the role of discourses in framing sensitive social and environmental issues (see Abma 2003). Indeed, the reflexive dialogues encourage students to dig for underlying assumptions and relate the stories and their characters to their own experiences (Gabriel and Connell 2010). The findings of this study suggest that the collaborative storytelling exercise lends itself to recognizing the discursive nature of stories as a collective and interactive venture of narrative construction and deconstruction (Gabriel and Connell 2010).

It was through the process of jointly constructing and deconstructing the stories that the students not only realized the role of social discourses in shaping CSR meanings but also had the opportunity to begin to examine CSR taboos, such as the amorality of business, continuous growth and the political nature of CSR (Kallio 2007). Nevertheless, as this study showed, the mere construction and reading of the co-created stories would not have been enough to promote critical reflexivity. Social discourses, such as managerialism, neo-colonialism and orientalism, which prevailed in the social context of the study, not only shaped the CSR stories but also constrained alternative ways of understanding them. Whereas the hegemony of these discourses in the CSR-stories could be viewed as a direct failure of the collaborative storytelling exercise, they were used by the instructor as a valuable resource for deconstructing the stories and thus promoting critical reflexivity (see Gabriel and Connell 2010).

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## **Creating a Ripple: Stories of Kindness in Tourism and their Transformative Possibilities**

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This proposed presentation aims to demonstrate how narratives provide highly emotional affirmations of behaviour by sharing stories of random acts of kindness in tourism contexts that create ripples of interactions among strangers. Such narratives, the presentation will show, embed tourists and hosts within a universalistic ethic of personal responsibility and gratitude. This ethic provides the basis for successful relationships with strangers and positions tourist-host relations as the quintessential measure of a civil society (Glover & Filep, 2015; Putnam, 1995, 2000). Taking a civic approach to understanding host communities, then, this presentation will specifically examine narratives of tourist and host interactions on the Appalachian Trail (AT), a large hiking track in the eastern United States. The AT is well known for “trail magic”—that is, acts of kindness, gifts, and other tangible and intangible forms of encouragement given to thru-hikers, sometimes anonymously and often unexpectedly, either from strangers who live along a section of the trail or from former thru-hikers who return to the trail to reciprocate the kindness they once received. The presentation will share stories in which donors of kindness are driven to give in tourism contexts. Moreover, it will offer narratives of how recipients of such kindness respond. In exploring these stories, the presentation responds to Glover and Filep’s (2015) call for a more concerted social science research agenda on the kindness of strangers and gratitude in tourism contexts. More specifically, it extends work on tourists’ attitudes toward the people they visit (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Murphy & Murphy, 2004; Pearce, 2011) by focusing on gratitude and the generosity of strangers. To this end, the presentation will contribute to better understandings of contemporary tourist motivations (Pearce, 2011; Pearce & Lee, 2005) by providing a eudaimonic lens on social interaction as a core tourist motive (Larsen et al., 2007).

More specifically, the narratives under examination in this presentation will highlight the personal impact of being a recipient of kindness. In so doing, the presentation will shed light on the ethic of care by hosts as well as willingness by tourists to accept kindness from strangers. While the interactions described in narratives were temporary, their impact proved to last longer than expected. All recipients emphatically indicated their willingness and desire to reciprocate, not necessarily to the donor to whom they were indebted (yet unlikely to

encounter again), but rather to other strangers to “pay it forward”. These subsequent actions typify the kind of societal norms we establish through stories of kindness, which influence social interactions, and are an important component of social capital in general (Putnam, 2000). In short, while acts of kindness from one stranger to another may be temporary in tourism, this presentation reveals acts of kindness feed the enduring traveller fellowship or kindness bank to help build the kind of civic community to which we aspire.



## **Domesticating “Nonwestern” Tourists: Cultural Contraflows in the Swiss Alps**

*Szilvia Gyimóthy, Aalborg University, Denmark*

For centuries, affluent visitors from Europe have shaped and consumed Swiss mountain space. The global circulation of iconic representations of the Berner Oberland has not only contributed to a consolidated and worldwide recognizable brand narrative (i.e. being the stage for exclusive retreats and outdoor adventures), but also established specific visitor trails along which tourist performances are conditioned and streamlined. Classic and popular cultural representations have fostered our notion of appropriate practices, recirculating images of contemplation and/or exploration of Alpine nature. Hikers, skiers and mountaineers have internalized small routines of how to move, dress and behave “properly” in the mountains. With the explosive growth of Asian guests visiting Switzerland, however, these Alpine routines and textures are destabilized, bringing about alternative and even disruptive tourism performances at popular sites. In the past five decades, Swiss landscapes featured in over sixty Bollywood films, turning Switzerland into the most preferred romantic honeymoon destinations for Asian visitors. In particular, the escapist musicals of Yash Chopra were influential in branding Switzerland as utopian landscape of love, fashioning consistent visual aesthetics, musical tropes and a plot framed around international travel. The lead characters would embark on an escapist journey to Europe (honeymoon, Interrailing, stag parties) in the quest for forbidden pleasures. Owing to the (pop)cultural hegemony of Bollywood in the non-western world, Asian middle class audiences see Switzerland as an utopian, pastiche-like paradise, which represents a liminal dating and luxury consumption space (rather than a space for solitary retreats or outdoor quests).

This paper studies how Swiss hosts are making sense of nonwestern tourism routines and how they are coping with disruptive tourist performances at Swiss mountain resorts. Drawing on a multi-modal dataset collected in May 2017 at Jungfrauoch/Top of Europe and Interlaken, the analysis focuses on two distinct traits. First, emergent microstoria and anecdotes about Asian guests are collected, identifying prevailing narratives about the “Exotic Other”. Second, domesticating practices are presented along an analysis of normative signs, directions and instructions conforming new visitors. The paper concludes with a discussion of the strategic implications of asymmetric cultural contraflows, suggesting that contemporary domesticating practices reproduce Orientalist discourses and deepen, rather than bridge the traditional host-guest divide.

## Hospitable Pedagogies

Emily Höckert, Linnaeus University, Sweden

During the past years, I have slowly moved from the role of a student towards a role of a teacher and supervisor. While doing this, I have hoped to continue to approach pedagogical encounters as a learner. In line with critical pedagogy, I embrace the possibilities of mutual learning where the roles of teachers and learners are constantly kept in move. The paper at hand draws closer attention to travel readings and guidelines that I wish to carry with me on my pedagogical journey.

As being a big fan of Emmanuel Levinas' (1969) idea of ethical subjectivity as welcome and Nel Noddings' (1984; 2002) research on ethics and care, this paper is driven by curiosity of how the notions of *hospitality* and *care* can help to envision and embody more responsible pedagogies. I use the idea of *hospitable pedagogies* to draw focus on host-guest relations in teaching and learning. These two philosophers, Levinas and Noddings, approach ethics as relational – as something that takes place in relations between ourselves. While acknowledging the fundamental role of 'I' in ethical encounters, they seem to agree that welcoming and care cannot be treated as projects of an individual subject – or of an individual teacher. Instead, responsibility takes always place in an intersubjective relation with the other.

Hospitality and pedagogy have been previously brought together, for instance, in theological education, international relations and indigenous studies. In these discussions, the notion of hospitality is connected to the issue of giving and welcoming *the gifts* of knowledge. By joining these streams of thoughts, can help to reflect how different ways of knowing and being can be welcomed through more hospitable approaches in teaching. The main purpose of this paper in the making, is to engage in a discussion about possibilities and challenges of mobilizing the roles of hosts and guests in our classrooms.

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## The materialization of fear: Urban tourism in the risk society

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Perhaps more than ever before Western societies are shaped by powerful imaginaries of terror, security treats and the politics of fear. Copenhagen, while often perceived as a liberal and ‘walkable city’, is no exception. Without public discourse or democratic participation, recent political initiatives have launched a set of new counter-terrorism measures, and popular streets are being equipped with massive granite stones, bollards and concrete blocks (to hinder heavy and unwanted traffic in the aftermath of the recent truck attacks in Europe). Yet how do these ‘stony materials’ come to matter in ways not simply reducible to security optimization, risk management and symbolic politics?

To reach this aim, and inspired by the evocative animism of H.C. Andersen, I draw on material studies, mobilities design and non-representational theories to provide a rich socio-material tale of how granite stones, bollards and other counter-terrorist materials contribute to the construction and ‘feel’ of contemporary urban tourism. How do such prominent material designs influence, both affectively, practically and emotionally, tourists? How are they re-appropriated and imbued with (inter)subjective meanings, and how may a richer understanding of how tourists perceive this new politicization of urban space lead to more hopeful ways of staging for urban tourism, and more generally, the mobilities of the city.





# **The power of co-creative story-telling in narratives of place: An account of VisitDenmark's social media practices to build alliances with storytellers**

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DMOs have for some years now developed strategies to create storytelling alliances with consumers in order to strengthen their destinations' narrative position on social media. The emergence of social media has facilitated a democratisation of media production and a power shift towards consumers who can now produce and publish content (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro, 2012). This means that the construction of brands within social media can be interpreted as a collective, dynamic co-creational process involving multiple brand authors who all contribute their personal stories (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013). DMOs have to some degree adapted to the new social media spaces of storytelling (Roque and Raposo, 2016; Usakli, Koç and Sönmez, 2017). They try to actively engage with their tourists online to utilise their stories, repackaging them and spread the positive narratives experienced at the destination. They need the users' help to do marketing and branding as the users' stories generate conversations about the destination and subsequently increase awareness. This paper offers an insight into VisitDenmark's social media strategy to build alliances with users through a co-creative approach. VisitDenmark's (2014) social media branding strategy is based on the so-called 'Unceasing Eco-system', where users' stories, knowledge and recommendations are utilised before, during and after they have been at the destination.

Practical examples of alliances are provided to show the various ways these alliances are forged. They also demonstrate the importance of utilising user's storytelling in destination branding. Some examples illustrate how powerful storytelling can be in creating a distinct and appealing narrative of the destination considering that entertaining, emotional and personal stories provide a way to build relationship with consumers in social media. Other examples are emblematic of the missed opportunities and the sometimes volatile relationship with social media users. Practical recommendations of how to improve storytelling and strengthen alliances with users are given.

A conceptual framework based on the sociological concepts of storytelling (Woodside, 2010), performance (Goffman, 1959), performativity (Butler, 1993), and mobility (Elliott and Urry, 2010) is employed to analyse and understand the practical examples of storytelling alliances created by VisitDenmark. The concepts are characterised as 'technologies of power' (Foucault, 1980), for their role in strengthening storytelling. Theories on co-creation and

branding (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012; Fournier and Avery, 2011), are also brought in to enable an in-depth discussion of the sort of relationships that social media afford DMOs and users.

The paper makes a clear contribution to the conference theme. It shows the importance of storytelling in creating relationships, spreading a message and inspiring people to invest time and money in coming to Denmark. If stories are personal, emotional, authentic and engaging, they can potentially be shared among millions of users on social media and change perceptions, values and discourse. The methods employed by VisitDenmark, DMOs, and marketers in general, serve as an example of how academics can also share, co-create and listen to stories, and thus build alliances with various stakeholders to become more visible in non-academic spaces.

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## **Stories of Advancing Gender Equity: University of Waterloo and its Commitment to HeForShe**

*Diana Parry, University of Waterloo, Canada*

Through the sharing of narratives, this presentation will discuss successes and strategies for advancing gender equity at the University of Waterloo (UW) in Canada with the intent to forward best practices applicable to tourism departments at post-secondary institutions. In May 2015, UW proudly announced its involvement in the UN Women's HeForShe and IMPACT 10x10x10 movement. Created by UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the HeForShe solidarity movement for gender equality provides a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of gender equality in our lifetime. This movement requires an innovative, inclusive approach that mobilizes people of every gender identity and expression as advocates, and acknowledges the ways that we all benefit from this equality. HeForShe invites people around the world to stand together as equal partners to craft a shared vision of a gender equal world and implement specific, locally relevant solutions for the good of all of humanity. Since its launch on September 20, 2014, at the United Nations, by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson, hundreds of thousands of men from around the world including Heads of State, CEOs, and global luminaries from all walks of life have committed to gender equality. HeForShe has been the subject of more than two billion conversations on social media, with off-line activities reaching every corner of the globe.

To act as the vision and the action of the HeForShe movement, the UN Women simultaneously launched the IMPACT 10x10x10, which involves ten global corporations, ten global universities and ten Heads of State. Each IMPACT champion was asked to identify and address gender equity within their own particular sector. Toward this end, UW has made its own commitments that advance comprehensive, long term, and sustainable gender equity, including to increase the number of women in faculty positions and the number of women in leadership positions. These ambitions are relevant to all academic units, including tourism departments. Accordingly, the narratives shared will help participants imagine the direction and possibilities of gender equity as a key consideration and goal for advancing their academic units.

## **Digital Stories: Gender and sex via geosocial networking**

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Everyday stories of dating, connection, and relationships can provide powerful insights into tourism practices. Dating and courtship practices have evolved with the introduction of automobiles, birth control pills, telephones, answering machines, and the Internet (Bailey 1988, 2004). The most recent of these innovations is geosocial networking applications (GSNAs). GSNAs use cell phones and satellites to create computer-mediated communication whereby users exchange a series of electronic messages and participate in different relational activities exclusively through cyberspace, highlighting the way that gender identity, sexual practices, public and private spaces, quality of life, and technology are intertwined.

Most GSNA's create similar participant interactions: a screen that shows users self-created profiles detailing their geographical location and an instantaneous chat system enabling participants to interact in real time to facilitate an in-person meeting often with the explicit intent for social and/or sexual interaction.

GSNAs quickly adapted for use abroad. For example, many GSNAs have applications that load a plane onto your profile to show you are travelling and enable you to preload travel dates and locations to let others know you are on your way. This real time interface makes GSNA's immensely popular, but also means they offer an important lens into contemporary dating and sexual social relations. Quiroz (2013) explained, "GPS dating provides opportunities to learn about and meet others in a form suited to its particular historical moment, a moment where proximity, convenience, and technology merge to promote finding love, literally around the corner" (p. 183-184).

The first GSNA was Grindr. Launched in 2008 to facilitate on-line connections away from heteronormative public space for gay men, Grindr is the largest and most popular GSNA, boasting 6 million users, in 192 countries. A more gender and sexually "inclusive" GSNA is Tinder, released as a mobile matchmaking application that grew from 300 to 1000 users within a week (News.com, 2014). Three years after its launch, Tinder is offered in 24 languages and has generated 1 billion matches making it the fastest-growing dating application in the United States (Baxter & Cashmore, 2013).



Despite the popularity of GSNAs, they have only recently garnered academic interest. A few empirical studies have focused on public health issues (i.e. transmission of sexually transmitted disease) and data security/privacy issues. Other research is either explanatory (Woo, 2015; Toch & Levi, 2012; Quiroz, 2013) and/or serves as a call for empirical research (Weiss & Samenow, 2010). What is missing, are people's stories of GSNAs and how they shape tourism experiences and practices. Using a cyberqueer theoretical framework and narrative inquiry we explore how GSNAs are transforming gender identities and sexual social practices for adults. Four research questions frame the proposed research: 1) How are GSNA's (re)shaping gender identities within straight, bisexual, lesbian, and gay communities; 2) What are the positive and negative impacts of GSNAs on sexual relationships, and subsequent quality of life; 3) How are public and private leisure spaces (re)shaped through the use of GSNAs and (4) What are the implications of GSNA on tourism practices.

## **Telling stories from the field – why, for whom and how?**

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### **Introduction**

Within our curriculum at the Multidimensional Tourism Institute in the University of Lapland, the students produce rich variety of stories from diverse field trips, case studies and courses. Stories are being produced for example in bachelor thesis projects, during field courses, related to internships in the industry, and within other course work in different forms, written and video.

As educators, we often feel that the stories produced during course work would benefit larger audience than just our students. However, once the course work is done, we – the lecturers, face the problem of how to make the stories shareable to other audiences. During the years, we have developed different ways of sharing the stories with wider audiences. Yet, these do not come without challenges. For example, in order to make the stories into a report, a lot of editing work is needed as well as access to proper publishing series. In order to make the stories into videos, we would need knowhow how to edit videos and where to publish those. In order to use the stories as data, we need to think about frame of valid data and research ethics.

Here, we wish to reflect on our current ways of collecting and sharing the stories from the field. Through two case examples, we reflect our teaching practices by looking back on the processes and ask why, for whom and how the stories were and should have been collected and told?

### **Writing a story from the field**

The first case example deals with an international master-level field course, which was arranged in August 2016 at the Varanger Peninsula, North-Norway. The course was part of a collaboration between seven northern universities, of a collaboration that aims to build a common master programme on northern tourism. The first author of this paper coordinated the course. She had arranged field courses and nature based tourism courses previously. In those

earlier courses, the main idea had been to involve the students in a common topic, development idea or case, and to give them a liberty to choose their own approach on the shared topic. At the end, student assignments were edited into a published report, or students had submitted abstracts summarising their development ideas and those were compiled for the local entrepreneur or destination.

The previous practices turned out not to work in the context of the international field course – or the small malfunctions of the practices became noticeable – and editing the student ideas into a report became a burden. First, it turned out that the instructions were not clear enough taken into account that the student group was very heterogeneous and the students were accustomed to very diverse practices in their home institutions. Second, some students were not able to relate with the local conditions and their development ideas did not seem to meet the local needs at all. Third, coordinating a pilot course on top of “normal” workload took more resources than what the coordinator had anticipated. The coordinator was left with 33 essays, of which she had evaluated and read six. Instead turning essays into an edited report, which would not bring any publishing points, or trying to summarise best development ideas for the entrepreneurs, she decided to try to catch some of the “spirit” that had been present during the field course. She wrote a story that was loosely based on student assignments, on lectures and on her own experiences. This strategy was chosen because writing a non-academic story feels personally appealing, a story can hopefully share something precious, and it can be shared in diverse arenas and used later as data. Furthermore, when arranging the course next time in September 2017 the coordinator will test building a frame for a next story together with the group.

### **Producing videographies on tourism experiences**

The second case study discusses videos produced by students in the context of bachelor level Tourism Experience course in Finnish Lapland. The videography approach to Tourism Experiences in our second year undergraduate course began when the new curriculum for our programme was designed in 2014 and we wanted to bring alternative modes of assessment to the programme. Video was suggested as a mode of assignment and since the second author had personal interest in the method, she decided to tackle the subject. In the academic representation, the mode of video is still a marginal form with textual representation being a standard form. Yet, different visual methods and methodologies have begun gaining ground in tourism studies and in parallel fields of study. On the contrary, in the professional

environment of tourism, video media is becoming a remarkable tool for marketing and advertising. These were the reasons why video was chosen as a way of “telling stories” in the respective course.

The aim of the course is to produce a small academic case study through video medium in student groups of three to four persons. The students make script and accordingly the produce a video of five to eight minutes based on chosen theoretical standpoint on experiences. The videos are then presented and shared in a screening session that ends the course. First, there was no intention to share the videos beyond the classroom. Yet, the ones with high grades were eventually shared in MTI’s Youtube-channel. These have been watched from some tens of times to over 200 times. By whom and why is not fully clear to the second author. Some of the videos are used as course material at the University of Applied Sciences in the MTI. Besides the immediate content, the videographies have also been a strong story influencer in the narrative of researcher identity of the second author. Through her teaching, she has been able to develop her own methodological expertise and research practice. However, the method of videography is still “an odd ball” in the current publishing environment.

### **Concluding remarks**

Through these case studies, we wish to address and discuss our own practice as educators and academics and how these two are to be combined in the current metrics oriented environment. Both of the cases highlight the fact that we need to do what we are interested in because we have so scarce resources. We also feel that it is important to be creative, both pedagogically and methodologically. It takes multiple rounds to find a balanced solution in telling stories created through teaching. Moreover, when the teaching environment changes, the perfect solution might not work anymore as in the first case. Finally, we must be patient and trust in our vision. The first author who coordinates international field courses hopes that someday she might have enough stories for a book. In the case of second author, the course has been taught for four consecutive years and only now, the stories produced through alternative methodologies begin to gain momentum in different audiences.

## **Co-created narratives - a way forward to sustainable tourism?**

*Catia Rebelo, Cardiff University, Wales*

In a globalized and extremely competitive world, strategic alliances are seen as one of the instruments towards sustainability. This is particularly true in the context of tourism due to its complex and transversal nature. In fact, participation and collaboration between multiple stakeholders is currently considered as a prerequisite to sustainable tourism (Beritelli, 2011; Bramwell, 2011; Liburd & Edwards, 2010). This, acknowledgment, reinforces the need for more participatory and collaborative approaches in the planning and decision making of sustainable tourism. Nevertheless, collaborative and innovative approaches in tourism studies are still far of becoming mainstream (Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte, 2013; Rakic and Chambers, 2010).

This paper aims to answer the call for more innovative and collaborative approaches in tourism research (see Ryzik, Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgley, 2013; Scarles, 2013) using visual narratives to empower, engage and increase the participation of key internal stakeholders such as local communities, often marginalized, in tourism development. Hence, the study looks at both local communities and Place Ambassadors. The latter is a formal scheme for local stakeholders, who voluntarily act as brokers between the locality and the visitors. It intends to understand the functional significance of the scheme as a co-creator of place branding initiatives. It also looks at the role played by internal stakeholders (formal and informal) in the promotion of sustainable places through a place branding strategy based on their own land meanings and narratives (storylines).

I argue that to be sustainable and competitive tourism approaches need to place more emphasis on stories, meanings, and community values (storylines) embedded in the sense of place. Nonetheless, even out there, these stories are ‘missing stories’ that are not heard by planners and decision makers in tourism which leads to brands unsustainability. In fact, ‘missing stories’ have been resulted in a disconnection between the brand values and residents, lack of support and even in some grass-roots movements of citizens against these initiatives (Ahn, Hyun and Kim, 2016). In order to address this issue, a new framework is proposed to guide empirical evidence on how to best involve internal stakeholders in a bottom up branding process, that is, on how to listen to these ‘missing stories’.

In a nutshell, the theoretical framework builds on the roles that internal stakeholders may play in place branding initiatives identified by Braun, Kavaratzis, Zenker (2013) and apply it within tourism networks, as well as identify a new role that may be played by external stakeholders such as visitors. The framework suggest that to involve stakeholders in a bottom up branding process the following measures are needed: first, researchers, educators and tourism planners need to assess residents' needs and motivations (resident as a main target), second to promote their civic participation by asking them how they would like to brand their place (residents as citizens), third by including them in the brand initiatives through hearing their ideas and stories (residents as part of a place brand), then by using the collective place-based narratives created, reflected and provided by the stakeholders to communicate the brand (residents as ambassadors) and, finally, by analysing its possible effect on the visitors and understanding whether and how they can also became external ambassadors for the place (visitors as ambassadors).

To test this framework an innovative multimethod and collaborative multi-case study entitled Planet and Satellite will be carried out in Wales (UK) and Portugal. In other words, the case study intends to provide an in-depth understanding of the main case study defined as Planet case – Brecon Beacons National Park, Wales – and a focused knowledge in the Satellite case - the Binaural-Nodar Association (audio-visual association), Portugal.

The paper presents the preliminary results collected on the Satellite case study, therefore, it is focused just on the roles that residents may play in bottom up branding strategies. The method comprised a continuous participant observation and the following stages of semi-structured interviews and open conversations in between: 1) a group of individual stories/narratives about the place and their identity was collected and video-taped by the researcher; 2) the participants watched individually their own short videos, edited by the researcher, and verified its accuracy as well as shared their feelings and impressions about it (film-elucidation); 3) workshop: the participants watched the composite film with each individual story that was developed (by the researcher and a local audio-visual association) to bring out a collective narrative from each single story, after watching the video the participants were divided into two groups and reflected collaboratively about the video well as all the project. To finalize the workshop the monitors of the two groups presented and shared the main conclusions of each group.

This method aimed to give voice to local communities by allowing them to share the narratives/stories about their place; narratives that they think best represent their community and identity; narratives that may help to boost communities' pride, sense of belonging, and

self-identity; and, create a tangible impact on the territory by providing an opportunity for dialogue and knowledge co-creation across communities, which may boost local initiative for place-shaping.

Although, these are just preliminary results it was clear that using a rather innovative and collaborative approach focused on the local community's visual narratives about their place resulted in agency for participants; resulted also in learning and new knowledge (missing stories) for them and for me as a researcher, and hopefully in the future for other researchers, educators and tourism planners.

Regarding the opportunity for dialogue and knowledge co-creation this was captured on participants' expressions: "*one of the most important parts of the project was the time to reflect in group upon our village and what the village means for all of us*", "*the questions, that made us to reflect and share our views upon the video and the village were what I liked the most in project*", "*the sharing promoted by the workshop was the most important*". In turn, this process of dialogue and project participation also boosted participants' agency as group A totally agreed with the following expression: "*watching to our community stories give me a bigger motivation to promote and preserve our heritage*", similarly, group B said that the motivation was reinforced by their participation on the project. The participants also shared finally comments such as "*this is the beginning...*", "*this (project) is the first brick on the wall*" regarding the action they are willing to take to shape their place and to improve their quality of life.

Finally, the 'missing stories' told us about personal stories, but also about the uses and traditions of the village as well as their visions and hopes for the village (past, present and future is well represented in the participants' narratives). Genuine stories that reflect the love and affection for the place but also the concern in maintain and preserve the local heritage. Stories and experiences that also highlight the so called "touristic attractions" but without mask it with truly authenticity that hardly defraud the visitors' expectations. These 'missing stories' are what gives life to the streets of the small village of Carvalhal de Vermilhas.

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## **Creating and sharing stories of work: from individual experience to collective reflection**

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This paper explores the proposition that individual stories when shared collectively can become powerful catalysts for learning, reflection and empowerment. Individuals ‘use story to make sense of their lives’ (Boland & Griffin, 2015: 90) and ‘to make sense of the world that surrounds them, and their place in it’ (Forster et al., 1999). This paper argues that whilst individually stories are valuable and can foster reflection, it is when shared collectively that new understandings can emerge.

The interest of this paper lies in the often untold stories of work, specifically in students working part-time in tourism and hospitality. Students increasingly work while studying and due to these jobs being easy to get and promising flexibility of hours, tourism and hospitality has become a key employer of students. Early employments such as these can be fundamental for young people’s socialisation into the world of work, transitioning into adulthood, the formation of their career identities, attitudes to and perceptions of work (Pavis, Platt and Hubbard, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Walmsley, 2016). Yet, little is known about student workers’ experiences of work, leaving their stories untold. Storytelling has been used in organisational research but the focus here is on how worker stories can be used to co-create new knowledge and provide learning opportunities.

This paper explores the potential of engaging students in storytelling to help them develop into more reflective, critical and ethical future tourism practitioners. Of interest here is an exploration of how young people narrate their stories of work and how they make sense of the critical incidents that take place in their workplace. These stories can be of empowerment as well as disempowerment, transformation and trust, as well as exploitation and inequality.

The paper explores the potential of sharing these individually created stories collectively to foster group understanding of and critical reflection on working conditions of student workers in tourism and hospitality. Through identifying shared experiences, these subjective, individualised incidents can become multi-voice collective shared understandings and provide a new angle to examine these workplaces. Thus, enabling students to move from the perception of workplace experiences being isolated and normalised to ones shared among student workers.

## **Street histories and fables – story making and telling at a street party**

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This paper explores the story-telling practices associated with the creation of a street museum. The *Everyday Histories Museum*, an assemblage of “bodies, artefacts and spaces with expressions of meaning and narratives” (Tardiveau & Mallo 2014:457) is used as a way of telling and developing stories of a street. The museum takes advantage of the liminal space (Turner, 1974) created by a temporary reconfiguration and interruption of the everyday functions and activities of a street to stage a party. By removing cars and adding canopies, activity areas, tables and chairs, bunting, a sound system and installations - the street becomes a shared place to meet, converse, explore, think, play, dance, eat and drink together. This interruption provides a rare opportunity for social interaction. The street party and is part of the social practices and process associated with place-making (Stokowsky, 2002) and community building and the museum is part of process of community imagining itself. The museum idea fits well with Arai and Pedlar’s (2006) notion of Communitarianism in the leisure context – part of community/social practice and which develops shared understanding and meaning. – enabling discussion and exploration of facets of the place, its history, people, norms and configuration. The stories told through the museum encourage dialogue about place and community. They tell a story and make a story – by contributing to the creation of shared memories and new stories across the diverse communities that reside in the street.

The story told through the museum is multi-layered. It has an historical element, providing information about the names and occupations of the people who lived in each house 115 years ago. It collates and presents these everyday histories to its current occupants on a modern everyday object (a clothes airer) and makes them available for each household to collect and take home. Some of the previous occupants’ lives are explored in more detail and presented on placards which are embedded in a hedge. It also creates and presents street stories based on fact (previous street parties) and fable (including an imagined royal visit). It exhibits ‘antique’ and modern everyday objects which have been found in houses in the homes and gardens in the street, (including a Victorian toilet seat, a horse-shoe, some home-made jams and chutneys, a lemon grown in the street, a baby-footprint, some flowers, a copper coal scuttle, a chunk of cornice, a drawing, a paper cup with a crown drawn on it) and each of these is given a labels to ascribe its value as an artefact of people’s lives within street. Each of these elements are used to create a discursive platform to consider the history of the street and

everyday lives of its residents. People can contribute to the museum and on the door step is a questionnaire for those who want to formalise and write down their experiences of the street-party and their feelings about the street and engagement in the community. The museum provides a playful way to engage with the spaces, stories and histories and opportunity for story making and story telling.

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## From coal to cool- the co-creation of a post-soviet tourismscape

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*This village was built on coal mining and people from all neighboring regions came here to settle. [...] After the break-up of the [Soviet] union people started to leave the village, the miners, especially the young ones. But we stayed behind. The ones who stayed behind are now mostly sheppards with herds [...] then, two or even three years ago, I think, people... foreign tourists started to come here. They showed an interest. They liked it here. People started to welcome them, and people were happy [...] We are always happy for guests. We wait [for them]. So lets start develop a tourism base, make it stronger! Please, we welcome this. (I#9)*

The above quote is taken from an in-depth interview with an informant in the mountain village of Chakta Jyrgalan, Kyrgyzstan in June 2016. Chakhta Jyrgalan, which literally translates The Mine Jyrgalan, used to be a prosperous small coal mining town during Soviet times. The quality of the coal is locally known to be among the best in the former USSR-countries. However, all since the break-up of the Soviet Union the village has experienced a rapid decline in population and a rise in unemployment. Many houses were abandoned, the supplies from Moscow were stopped, the shops disappeared and the mines were no longer maintained, left dripping with water and extremely dangerous to enter.

The village seemed to have been almost forgotten until a few years ago when a Jyrgalan-based project was picked among more than 50 applicants to be supported by the USAID driven project Business Growth Initiative (BGI). The aim of the BGI-program was “to generate greater income for local destinations as well as contribute to the development of the Kyrgyz tourism sector overall”<sup>7</sup>. The Jyrgalan-project was initiated by a Kyrgyz entrepreneur based in the regional capital of Karkol. Today, only few years after, people in the former coal mining village seems to have a new faith in the future, the prices of the houses has gone up and the number of visitors are increasing every year. Moreover Chakta Jyrgalan is being rebranded, with new big road signs reading “Welcome to Jyrgalan Valley” and through massive marketing campaigns, in order to attract even more tourists.

### Research question

Using Chakta Jyrgalan as a case, the article will address how the locals come to gaze their surroundings through the eyes of the tourists and if the way tourists are using the surroundings, changes the local inhabitants perception of nature and landscape.

In other words the article will explore how, or if, tourism indirectly changes local inhabitant’s gaze of their own village and especially the surrounding nature, once they start perceiving it

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/fact-sheets/business-growth-initiative>

through the eyes of the non-local tourists. Moreover, the article will identify if tourism changes the local inhabitants own practices towards nature. This is interesting since it can reveal how local values and perceptions are influenced by external practices and how it can result in a co-creation of new places, new identities and new stories.

### **Analytical frame and theoretical contribution:**

There has been much research on how tourists perceive places and landscapes through the so called “tourist gaze” (Urry 1990 ; Fyhri 2008). Likewise, a growing body of research has been carried out studying local inhabitant’s perceptions of tourism, and tourism development (Johnson et al 1994; Caniazares et.al 2014). The latter have been useful in measuring attitudes towards how tourism as a practice is causing positive or negative changes to the lives of local. Most of these studies, however, have focused on human relations, i.e how local inhabitants perceive the tourists (Maoz 2005).

What seems to be lacking, however, is research on how inhabitants perceive and change their understanding of their physical surroundings, such as nature and landscape, i.e non-human elements, following tourism development.

To explore these questions the article will make use of theoretical concepts and research methods from political ecology and Actor Network Theory. The research will show how “processes, people and things becomes entangled into the touristscape, by complex processes of translations” (van der Duim 2007: 962).

However, the article will contribute to previous established theory by not merely looking at the processes, people and things that becomes *entangled* into the touristscape of *The Valley of Jyrgalan*, but also look into the processes, people and things that are *disentangled*, i.e is excluded, either consciously or unconsciously, from the mining village (“the minescape”) of *Chakta Jyrgalan*. The article will study this process of entanglement or disentanglement, through the process of translation, here defined as “a definition of roles and the delineation of a scenario” (Callon 1986:25-26).

Following Law and Hetherington (1999:2), the paper will distinguish between three materials of tourism when identifying the translation processes: 1) bodies, 2) objects and spaces and 3) information and media. By using the case of Chkata Jyrgalan, the paper will look into how bodies, objects, spaces, information and media are translated into a touristscape (van der Duim 2007), while others materials are consciously left out. The paper focuses on how local people follow this process and how, or if, this process also changes their own perception of their surroundings.

Applying a political ecology lens, the paper will moreover study how the translation of Chakta Jyrgalan into touristscapes, relates to global discourses on nature and environment, arguing that it is impossible to understand the co-creation of The Valley of Jyrgalan, without relating it to narratives of ecological modernization (Hajer 1995).

### **Preliminary conclusion**

Through in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis, it is has become clear that that local inhabitants feel very proud of the past industrial history of the village. The

past coal mining industry has not only transformed the physical landscape of the village but has also strongly influenced how local inhabitants have perceived their village, its natural surrounding as well as their own identity. With tourism developing, an industry resting on a complete other way of consuming nature, the past perception of the surrounding is being challenged and the local inhabitants start to perceive and use their village and nature in another manner. The risk of this translation process, is that past coal mining industry is simply being “swept under the carpet”, leading to more than 70 years of rich industrial history and local identity to be forgotten, undermining the importance that this industry has played also for the creating of the current touristscape.

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## **Telling our institutional story: four ideas that may inform our storytelling and three stories we could tell**

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This presentation discusses the way institutions (Universities and Schools) tell themselves, and others, stories about their purpose and mission. Story telling for institutions turns out to be very important: the quality and nature of those stories is directly linked to questions of trust and legitimacy. Trust and legitimacy are the only currencies in the end in which we can trade to sustain our roles and our work.

A number of larger trends have combined to question our relationship to, and view of, important institutions in government, politics, business, religion and civil society. These questions go to the heart of why institutions are important in the first place. They are also driving a discussion about whether the current mood of distrust, disengagement and disruption, which seems to be reaching epidemic proportions, signals a desire to replace institutions, bypass them or to change them so they work more effectively. Institutions retain the relevance and respect they crave by telling compelling and simple stories to themselves and to the people and communities they serve, about their purpose and mission. If those stories, or narratives, become confused or obscured, or perhaps even lost altogether, the result is that trust and legitimacy start to evaporate, and are ultimately lost altogether.

We are living at a time of transition when institutions of all sorts are leaking trust and legitimacy. That is partly the explanation for Trump, Brexit and at least some elements of the recent election here in Australia. Think of the plethora of royal commissions into child abuse and the abuse of children in institutions. Think of the Chilcott inquiry in the UK into the Iraq war. Or the effect of Wikileaks and Edward Snowden on people's perceptions of the national security apparatus in the US and globally. People and institutions appear to be drifting apart, fueled by a related distrust of experts and elites. It is a very dangerous and unsettling combination.

There are four ideas that could be part of shaping the context within which to think about the stories that we (as tourism / hospitality people, and universities more generally) need to tell about ourselves. These are: the age of distrust; the end of power; too big to

know; and the big shift – from efficiency to learning. In education, the contest seems to be strengthening between a more recent narrative, which is largely transactional, instrumental and economic, and a deeper, more persistent story about education’s intrinsic moral and public purpose. As Alan Finkel, Australia’s Chief Scientist noted, there is an important distinction between a focus on making graduates “job ready” – an increasingly difficult, if not impossible task in a world of work whose contours and content are being so comprehensively churned by the combination of technology and competitive and economic pressure – and the ability to help graduates become “job capable.”  
<http://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/2016/07/speech-swinburne-university/>

This presentation will also examine possible ‘stories’ that our research and learning centres can tell to protect, extend and, very likely, rescue the trust and legitimacy we need.





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