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Twenty Years on: Reflections on the Journeys Travelled and Future Directions for Tourist Studies

Michelle Duffy, Caroline Scarles, Tim Edensor, Gordon Waitt and Adrian Franklin

As founding, past and current editors, we are very excited to welcome you to this special issue celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Tourist Studies*. In 2001, this journal was established in what the founding editors, Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang, called an 'exciting and challenging time for work on tourism' (2001, p. 1). In their inaugural editorial, they questioned the apparent trajectory of tourist studies at the beginning of the 21st century, puzzled because at a time of exciting scholarship in such transdisciplinary fields as mobility studies and cosmopolitanism, they felt that 'tourism studies had become stale, tired, repetitive and lifeless' (p. 5). Much research identified multiple variants of the tourist quest for authenticity, expressed a preoccupation with self-aware post-tourists who commented cynically about the constructed attractions that they beheld, whilst tourism was often understood as something undertaken while away from home as tourists entered exciting, liminal holiday realms in which they could become satiated with alterity before once more slipping safely back into their mundane, everyday worlds.

Franklin and Crang envisaged this new journal as an avenue for providing 'critical perspectives on the nature of tourism as a social phenomenon' (p. 6) and offered a series of statements and departure points that set out the trouble with tourism and travel theory. The word "exciting" was used to sell the idea of researching the full potential and extent of tourism studies and even to question the relevance of the home/away binary, as people freely inhabited the spaces of travel and mobility, and as tourism turned to the everyday. This framing challenged tourism's earlier reified, reiterative discussions. Suddenly, there was an outlet in which the fresh perspectives initiated in other disciplines could be deployed to examine tourism. The study of tourism, it suddenly seemed, was multiple, open-ended and replete with exciting possibilities. Invitations to adopt multifarious theoretical perspectives were gratefully taken up. As Franklin and Crang made us aware, the importance of the shift away from tourism as a study of fetishized, discrete, localised "things" directed by industry-led priorities opens up the potential for tourist studies to better understand the complex ways we are embedded or dislocated within places, cultures and communities. In early issues, we see this in the ideas that tourism could be an everyday practice, was performative, media-inspired, often organised around family concerns, could be extreme and was frequently contesting decentred dominant concepts. The journal became exciting, an outlet for novel thinking, geographical diversity and explorations of multiple tourisms and tourists.

Franklin and Crang advocated a widening of the scope of tourism research to embrace the multiplicity of contexts, systems, practices and bodies that combine to produce the complexities of the fluid and dynamic nature of the sector, and the fundamental role that tourism plays in societies across the world. Indeed, they identified an enormous scope and potential for tourist studies that recognised the value of theory to date, but simultaneously advocated an evolution of our understanding of tourism to extend beyond binaries and typologies. They also questioned tourism's preoccupation with "the resort" as an outdated subject and archetype for tourist studies, and most especially as a somewhat tired theoretical model for the seemingly endless expandability of tourism that pervaded much thinking. Instead, Franklin and Crang encouraged tourism scholars to widen their attention to not only focus on "the resort" as an essentially place-based activity, but to embrace the diversity of new impacts, touristic forms and ways of life that ever-rising levels of mobility engendered. Indeed, in the 20 years since suggesting ways forward for tourism research, the journal has been a significant platform for extending the analysis of tourism. Extraordinary papers explored materiality, hermeneutics, actor network theory, Lacanian philosophy, Foucauldian thinking and post-colonial studies in diverse tourist contexts. Some articles focused on family, LGBT

tourism, and feminist tourist adventures while others considered the distinctive endeavours of hedonistic youth tourism, culinary, adventure, volunteer and nature-based tourisms, medical tourism, eco-tourism and music tourism. Furthermore, the western tourist became further displaced, with potent accounts that explored the perspectives of Chinese, Indian, Zimbabwean, Brazilian, Australian Aboriginal, Romanian, Bosnian, Czechoslovakian and Moroccan tourists, amongst many others – shifts echoed in the wider realms of tourism research as advancements were being made through journals such as the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* and *Annals of Tourism Research* and the subsequent introduction of journals such as *Mobilities* in 2006.

To celebrate this journal's significant milestone of twenty years of providing authors a means of advancing critical tourism studies, we are very pleased to share with you a compilation of commentaries that reflect on where our critical journeys have taken us over the past 20 years and what we feel are the exciting directions, challenges and opportunities that may lie ahead. Indeed, these past 12 months have raised so many questions and responses that continue to strongly resonate with Franklin and Crang's original observations of an exciting and challenging time for work on tourism. We invited members of the current editorial board to provide these commentaries, to reflect on their areas of expertise and consider where the cutting edge of tourism studies lies, and where it may be heading. Such reflections are not intended to provide a definitive research agenda, but serve to provoke thinking and possible directions to explore. Indeed, there is always scope for explorations to more extensively investigate a range of theoretical perspectives, for instance, by exploring the affectual and non-representational dimensions of tourism, or extending analysis of the relationship between mobilities and tourism. And much potential inheres in attending to an ever-more diverse field in which tourist sites proliferate and distinct practices emerge and expand across the world.

Drawing on the key issues raised by Franklin and Crang in the inaugural editorial, this special issue reflects the key "departure points" in the evolution of tourist studies as research has sought to locate tourism in a social field, extending critique of the "problematic relationship with the process of defining and regulating tourism" (ibid, p.7). In doing so, they opened critiques of tourism to embrace the extraordinary everyday; exploring how communities and the multiplicity of stakeholders within the complex systems of tourism are able to position themselves in order to realise the benefits tourism can enable. In this special issue, such understanding is reflected upon by Judith Mair and Michelle Duffy in their commentary on the significance of festivals and events in a time of increased change and risk that nonetheless has meant we have acknowledged the importance of simply being with other people. In doing so, Mair and Duffy critique the potential of events and festival spaces to open up opportunities to realise the extra-ordinariness of festivals as tourism events, spaces and communities, before setting out their reflections on how this field of research within tourism can develop going forward. Peter Lugosi then reflects on the complexities of tourism systems from the perspective of the nexus between tourism and hospitality. In his commentary, he critiques hospitality as a sensitising concept that further enables us to understand tourism as a socio-economic phenomena embedded in a wider global system. In his commentary, David Crouch provides a critique of the character and force of individuals as tourists as we move to deepen our grasp of imagination, creativity and how we shape and incorporate such practices into our everyday lives through performance and practice. Michael O'Regan develops such thinking, reflecting on the development of communities, hierarchies, histories and interests of backpackers as he critiques the discourse of community in this context and challenges the disconnect between authoritative voices and conventions that influence the manifestations of such forms of travel within a global context.

Franklin and Crang also outlined the importance of understanding tourism as existing in a world of flows. Since the first issue in 2001, there has been an increasing wealth of research that has emerged through the establishment of the mobilities paradigm, led by authors such as John Urry, Mimi Sheller and Kevin Hannam. In this special issue, Kevin Hannam, Gareth Butler, Alexandra Witte and Dennis Zuev, reflect upon the journey of tourism mobilities in the last twenty years. Exploring central concepts of mobilities in walking, cycling, driving and waiting, they provide insight on how mobilities research has shaped our understanding of this world of flows, flux and mobile encounters. From developments in rhythm analysis and mobilities of movement within and through places, they reflect on the modalities of such practices before offering their reflections on how experiences of global immobility through lockdown hold consequences for waiting, stillness and immobility and share their views on what this means for a future world of tourism mobilities and research in this field.

Recognising the dominance of ocular-centrism within tourism research to that point, Franklin and Crang advocated the critiquing the dominance of such visual repertoires and recognised the role of the body as central to tourism experiences, and embracing tourism as a system of presencing and performance that go beyond confines of representation. Though initially breaking these theoretical orthodoxies identified by our founding editors, John Urry's (1990) seminal work on the tourist gaze had devolved into papers in which an ocular-centric fixation sought to investigate how tourists photographed, solitarily contemplated scenes and scanned spaces for signifiers of cultural difference. In all of this, as Franklin and Crang recognised, the multisensory diversity of tourist experience was overlooked. More problematically, the archetypal tourist was overwhelmingly construed as a middle class, white, western male. In this special issue the paper by Phoebe Everingham, Pau Obrador Pons and Hazel Tucker reflects on the progress made within this area since 2001, exploring not only the move to increasingly centralise the body within our understanding of the manifestations of tourism, but the steps this has taken and the ways in which our current understanding of tourism as embodied practice and performance.

Whilst the inaugural editorial provided much stimulus for invigorating a future research agenda for tourism research, there was no direct mention of sustainability or climate change, something that would (and should) change the forms that tourism takes in the present as well as in the future. It was not surprising that ten years later, John Urry published *Climate Change and Society*, and began sketching out the likely forms in which different societies would emerge around low carbon living. The tourism studies we imagined in 2001 were unimaginable in the bleak, austere or dystopian future scenarios Urry identified in 2011. One crucial strand is engaging with the question, what is sustainable tourism in the Anthropocene? This is an era characterised by increased travel disruptions created by the increasing frequency and intensity of storms, cyclones, flooding and wildfires. Such disruptions challenge taken-for-granted norms of tourism as integral to Western ideas of freedom, reason, progress and rationality. In recent years, the affluent, globe-trotting tourist exemplified the worst excesses of high carbon living, as bad for global warming as it was dangerous as a nursery for the arrival of new deadly viruses. Today, in the first major pandemic since the Spanish flu, we are only too aware of tourists as potential super-spreaders of new waves of dangerous viruses. In this special issue, Chris Gibson, Richard Sharpley, and Edward Hujibens each reflect upon the wealth of research that has been undertaken in response to these questions. How scholars respond to such questions will change tourist studies once more, something that commentaries in this anniversary issue raise, as too often sustainable tourism works within conceptual frameworks that privileged white human males as the locus of rationality and always separate from the environment. This invites engagement with critical thinking like that of Plumwood (2007) to identify characteristics of a different mode of humanity that is self-revising and self-critical. Tourism and allied industries are

attempting to rebuild and re-activate economies, yet this period also offers opportunities to address longer-term implications to ensure support for building sustainable and resilient communities, environments and the industry itself. Strategies for rethinking the politics of sustainable tourism could be gleaned from studies that engage with tourist experimentation. As Mol (2010) argues, experimentation or “playful tinkering” proves attentiveness and response-ability, and is key in generating care relationships and heightening mutual vulnerabilities. The work that tourism does in encouraging experimentation and creating possibilities of responsibility for the planet offers a promising research agenda that is reflected upon by our contributors in this special issue.

Just as seismic shifts have taken place in the centrality of sustainability and climate change within tourism research, another area to have received little attention in Franklin and Crang’s 2001 editorial was that of technology. Indeed, the words ‘digital’ and ‘technology’ did not even feature in their writing. In 2001, we were at the dawn of the new digital age, with little knowledge of the emergence of digital technologies and the truly world-changing implications that were to come that truly revolutionised not only tourism, but the entire world. Indeed, it now seems almost absurd to undertake any research without technology either being central to the subject of our focus or fundamentally influencing the manner in which we are able to realise our data. From the emergence of everyday use of the internet in the late 1990s and early 2000’s, our technological world has changed beyond recognition and the speed and acceleration of advancements in digital technology continues to increase. Providing an insight into some key developments, Tom van Nuenen and Caroline Scarles reflect on this exponential growth as technology has become fundamentally integrated into our lives. From digital familiarisation and the sharing economy, to mixed realities, gaming, algorithms and artificial intelligence, van Nuenen and Scarles reflect on the interplays of agencies of the human and non-human and the effects these have on our epistemic and ontological capacities as tourists.

As we live in times of such uncertainty and global change, the final contribution of the special issue by Carina Ren offers reflection on how as an academy we can explore what the “trouble” of thinking and knowing about tourism means in contemporary society. In doing so, she offers insight into key questions of where do we go, where to do we look, and whom do we listen to and learn from to know about tourism, and how can we work together to improve our sensibilities towards knowing tourism in the world today? Indeed, in reflecting on how far we have come as a community researching the wide range of manifestations, relationships, systems and infrastructures supporting our understanding of tourism within contemporary society, we share the hopefulness expressed by Morgan and Ateljevic (2011) that we can continue to work together through a values-led perspective that is driven by collaboration and partnership to provide the foundation for a hopefulness for tourism and the researchers working in this exciting field for the next twenty years.

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