



## **IGU-Commission for “Cultural Approach in Geography”**

**Chair: Prof. Benno Werlen**

**Commission “Tourism  
and Leisure Geography  
and Global Change”  
Chair: Prof. Jarkko  
Saarinen**

### **Touristic cultures: spatialities, mobilities, corporealities**

**Sion, June 21-23 2010**

The tension between spatialities, mobilities and corporealities is co-constitutive of tourism. The nexus between tourism and mobility is therefore a first important issue. But the cultural approach in geography also deals with the various ways of corporealities, rules and equipments of human practices. The tourist practices and the learning of ‘tourist cultures’ are therefore at stake. Finally, tourism participates with the global circulation patterns through the tourist’s ‘dis-placement’, but also through financial transactions and circulation of images. This assemblage gives birth to tourist cultures informed by shared ways of doing by tourists, and through the commodification of standardised tourist products. All this partakes to the Western culture if not to a ‘global tourist culture’. Within this framework, the following questions could be raised within this conference:

1. How does tourism as a phenomenon affect cultural approaches in geography? In which different ways are the conceptual tools of cultural geography able to stimulate new approaches to tourism? Which are the dead ends? Does tourism challenge certain assumptions or models of cultural geography? Epistemological contributions are welcome that deconstruct the geographer’s gaze of the cultural approach on tourism.
2. The learning of tourist cultures is one of the central elements raised by Löfgren (1999): *how have we acquired the skills of being tourists?* This is a central question that has not yet received substantial answers. Is there, in the course of globalisation, only one hegemonic ‘Western’ tourist

- culture or can a plethora of different even counter-hegemonic cultures be discerned?
3. Tourist practices are meaningful only because of the 'dis-placement', a change of place and location, which links tourism to mobility studies. What is the significance of tourist practices within cultures of mobility? Which are the interdependencies between tourist practices and other kinds of mobility practices? Which representations of place are mobilised by tourists and turned into cultural capital? How personal and collective identities are affected by tourist practices?
  4. The technologies of information and communication (Internet, mobile phone etc.) are one element of the performance of contemporary tourist practices. Which are the effects on the sense of place and the meaning of the dis-placement if tourists continue to be 'attached' to the social network and routines of the home place?
  5. The assemblage of tourist practices constitutes a performance. Corporeal techniques, competences, know-how, technologies, instruments, money, food, garment, politics, signs, marker, attractions etc are necessary to "do tourism". The notion of assemblage within the actor-network-theory (Latour, 2000) could indeed be useful in order to describe the differences between tourist practices.
  6. The corporeal engagement is crucial for the tourist practices. Corporeal techniques – walk, alpinism, skiing, *flânerie*, tanning etc. – are necessary in order to perform the various practices. Therefore, tourist practices can be seen as 'cultural and technological achievements' because they necessitate the mastering of the body in a certain way according to the situation. Practising a place of otherness also permits to perform an 'other' sexuality through non-routine sexual practices.

If you are willing to give a presentation, you are invited to submit an abstract (up to 300 words) – either in French or in English, the two official languages of the IGU – to [christine.eden@iukb.ch](mailto:christine.eden@iukb.ch) until 31 January 2010.

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