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Materialities, Memories, and Lived Event Tourism Experiences

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Title: Materialities, Memories, and Lived Event Tourism Experiences

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Abstract:

Our paper furthers understanding of lived experiences in tourism settings as remembered by informants. We propose the value of a phenomenological ‘artefact elicitation’ method in revealing rich insights into informants’ recollections of their lived tourism experiences. Our approach, which is underpinned by tourism, anthropology, and psychology, draws from both visual and material culture concepts. Our presentation considers lived experience, phenomenological approaches, and the proposed artefact elicitation approach, which draws from visual methods, material culture, and memory concepts.

The use of phenomenological methods has become increasingly pertinent in studying consumers’ embodied lived experiences in tourism settings, both conceptually and empirically (e.g., Cresswell, 2013; Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). The emergence of innovative sociological methods in tourism has seen increased interest in the visual and ethnographic and phenomenological methods melded with visual practices, including photography, film-making, and image collection or creation. These have been forwarded as approaches to explore embodied performances of lived tourism experiences (Haldrup & Larsen, 2003; Pink, 2007, 2016; Rakić & Chambers, 2012; Scarles, 2010). Material culture has long been studied in archaeology, anthropology, geography, history, and design disciplines. More recently, the ‘material turn’, being concerned with objects, bodies, and texts (Law & Hetherington, 2000), has been seen across the social sciences and in tourism studies specifically (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Muecke & Wergin, 2014). The postmodernist perspective of history as a constructed and illusionary phenomenon has led to interest in the study of memory in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (see Baudrillard, 1994; Jenkins, 2003; Joyce & Kelly, 1991; Stone & Spiegel, 1992; amongst others). The subjective nature of memory may be viewed through its relationship with material objects and their role in remembering experiences. We therefore propose the use of artefacts as a valuable means of igniting memories of lived tourism experiences, and suggest the use of souvenirs and other objects in this approach (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Our artefact elicitation approach adapts a photo-elicitation method by inserting informant collected visual and material sources within phenomenological interviews (Harper, 2012). Our approach aims to elicit detailed multi-sensorial and corporeal personal accounts of informants’ memories of their embodied lived experiences and to highlight remembered in-depth memories of their engagement and immersion within these experiences. Edinburgh’s Festival Fringe is a cultural hallmark event tourism phenomenon, (Getz & Page, 2016; Todd, Leask, & Ensor, 2017). Our paper draws from a study which was concerned with understanding stakeholders’ lived experiences in this setting. We conclude by discussing the analytical potential of artefact elicitation as a useful and innovative means of understanding the nature of memories of lived experiences in further tourism settings.

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