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Hannam, Kevin, Butler, Gareth and Paris, Cody Morris (2013) Developments and key issues in tourism mobilities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 44 . pp. 171-185. ISSN 0160-7383 [Article] (doi:10.1016/j.annals.2013.09.010)

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Developments and Key Issues in Tourism Mobilities

Kevin Hannam is Professor of Tourism Mobilities at Leeds Metropolitan University, (Leeds, UK, LS6 3QW) and a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg, (Johannesburg, South Africa, Email:<k.m.hannam@leedsmet.ac.uk>).

Gareth Butler is Senior Lecturer in Tourism in the Department of Tourism, Flinders University, (Adelaide, Australia).

Cody Morris Paris is Senior Lecturer in Social Science at Middlesex University-Dubai (Dubai, UAE) and a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg, (Johannesburg, South Africa).

Abstract: This paper examines key developments in recent tourism mobilities research. It begins by outlining the recent conceptualisation of tourism mobilities, arguing that it is not just that tourism is a form of mobility like other forms of mobility but that different mobilities inform and are informed by tourism. It then examines work which has been developed in terms of materialities, autmobilities and new technologies. It concludes by discussing mobile methodologies and some thoughts on future research directions.

Keywords: tourism mobilities; materialities; cars; new technologies; methodologies

Introduction

In March 2013 it was widely reported that ten people had been arrested in Hong Kong under new regulations restricting the amount of baby milk formula being taken into mainland China. Since 2008 when the chemical melamine contaminated baby milk formula in China led to the deaths of six babies and the sickness of an additional 300,000 babies, Chinese parents have sought supplies from outside mainland China. This has led to the phenomena of baby milk tourism, with Chinese tourists visiting the UK and Australia as well as Hong Kong, buying up baby milk formula to take back or send back to China leading to a shortage in these countries and subsequent rationing. While this ostensibly reflects food security concerns, it also highlights issues of tourism mobilities – how tourism is intimately involved and predicated on the movement of a whole range of materialities, fuelled, in part, by new forms of Chinese outbound tourism and increased aeromobilities, and how such mobilities are increasingly regulated by governments leading to immobilities.

This paper thus reviews work from what has been termed the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006) and what has become known more recently as the study of ‘tourism mobilities’ by examining the materialities, automobilities and technologies involved in making tourism happen. These themes have been chosen as they illustrate many of the key issues involved in contemporary tourism mobilities. Tourism research has paid attention to the material through, for example, heritage tourism, but a mobilities approach demonstrates the integral importance of various materialities for tourism performances. Tourism research has also considered its relationships with transport previously, however we contend that a focus on

automobilities allows us to show how discourses and practices of 'freedom' implied by driving underline the contemporary tourism experience in some contexts.

Similarly, the use of new technologies have also given much hope of transforming tourism practices and we illustrate this by examining the ways in which mobile technologies have become integrated with being on the move but also the limitations that this also brings. Finally, we also outline some recent work which has developed what have become known as 'mobile methodologies'. In the remainder of this introduction we develop the argument for a mobilities approach to the study of tourism.

The study of tourism has often been seen as on the periphery of the social sciences, however, the mobilities paradigm arguably allows us to place tourism at the core of social and cultural life rather than at the margins (Coles and Hall, 2006; Hannam, 2009). From this perspective, tourism mobilities are viewed as being bound up with both everyday and mundane journeys as well as with the more exotic encounters that have been the mainstay of much of the analysis in contemporary tourism studies. Tourism is then analysed not as an ephemeral aspect of social life that is practised outside normal, everyday life. Rather it is seen as integral to wider processes of economic and political development processes and even constitutive of everyday life (Franklin and Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2003; Coles and Hall, 2006; Edensor, 2007; Hannam and Knox, 2010).

It is not *just* that tourism is a form of mobility like other forms of mobility such as commuting or migration but that different mobilities inform and are informed by

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tourism (Sheller and Urry, 2004). In any situation, mobilities involve the movement of people, the movement of a whole range of material things, and the movement of more intangible thoughts and fantasies. Mobilities also involve the use of a range of technologies both old and new. In short, proponents of the mobilities paradigm argue that the concept of mobilities is concerned with mapping and understanding both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital, and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space, and the travel of material things within everyday life simultaneously (Hannam et al., 2006).

In terms of mapping the larger-scale movements of people, objects, capital, and information across the world a mobilities perspective allows us to analyse the connections between tourism and geopolitics critically. In terms of tourism, foreign policy discourses can have profound effects on when, who and for what reason people are able to freely cross international borders. Geopolitical discourses or 'scripts' as shown in a variety of institutional and popular media, are thus powerful, and as they divide up the world, can lead to conflicts over space and resources (O'Tuathail, 2002). Raoul Bianchi (2007) has analysed the relationships between tourism, the freedom to travel and the geopolitics of security. He argues that implicit in much of contemporary geopolitics is a western liberal ideal discourse of tourism as freedom (for some but not for others). He writes of how "tourism and particular destinations can become drawn into political conflicts when accumulated local grievances (linked to poverty, ethnicity or questions of religious identity) and wider geopolitical imperatives collide." Moreover, "[w]here perhaps tourism becomes even

more closely intertwined with global geopolitics is in the mapping of global risk and threats to security through the mechanism of state travel advisories” (Bianchi, 2007: 70).

Advisories such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK are extremely powerful in portraying a dominant Western worldview. The mobilities of global tourism, then, are intimately entwined with broader geopolitical issues such as migration, inequality and indeed, climate change. From this perspective the relations between migration, return migration, transnationalism, and tourism are thus being increasingly researched (King and Christou, 2011). And, of course, the ways in which physical movement pertains to upward and downward social mobility are also central here as research on expatriates demonstrates (Butler and Hannam, 2013a). In such a context we need to examine how tourism becomes part of this social mobility and how it relates to new cultural identities and notions of cultural citizenship particularly in the contact zones mentioned above.

Global tourism mobilities also entail distinct social spaces or ‘moorings’ that orchestrate new forms of social and cultural life, for example, stations, hotels, motorways, resorts, airports, leisure complexes, beaches, galleries, roadside parks and so on. Tourism mobilities examine the embodied nature and experience of the different modes of travel that tourists undertake, seeing these modes in part as forms of material and sociable dwelling-in-motion, places of and for various activities (see Featherstone, 2004). These ‘activities’ can include specific forms of talk, work, or

information-gathering, but may involve simply being connected, maintaining a moving presence with others that holds the potential for many different convergences or divergences of global and local physical presence (Hannam *et al.*, 2006). For example, recent work by Sattar *et al.*, (2013) has illustrated this by examining religious obligations to travel for the Pakistani diaspora in the UK.

Indeed, places become important for tourism mobilities in this context. Often a clear distinction is made between places and those travelling to places; pushing or pulling people to visit. The mobilities paradigm argues against the ontology of distinct 'places' and 'people'. Places are thus not so much fixed but are implicated within complex networks through which "hosts, guests, buildings, objects and machines" are contingently brought together to produce certain performances (Hannam *et al.*, 2005: 13). Moreover, places are also "about proximities, about the bodily co-presence of people who happen to be in that place at that time, doing activities together, moments of physical proximity between people that make travel desirable or even obligatory for some" (Hannam *et al.*, 2006: 13). In their discussion of Singapore as the archetypal 'mobile city', Oswin and Yeoh (2010: 170) thus argue that the:

notion of the 'mobile city' thus makes us think about flows and movements in and through the global city in specific ways. It of course facilitates the study of migration as more than a movement from one end point to another. Attention is called to the lines that connect points, to journeys and their continuous negotiations. ... The interrelationships between mobile experiences also come into view. Further, the study of the mobile city extends our interest to the study of the movement of ideas and material things that may or may not coincide

with the movement of people. ... So the mobile city approach understands the city as much more than a calculation of border-crossing labour and capital inputs and outputs. A process-orientation enables examination of interrelationships of movements of people, objects, capital and ideas in and through the overlapping scales of the local, the bodily, the national, and the global.

Although mobilities research emphasises the inter-relation of different scales as discussed by Oswin and Yeoh (2010) above, in what follows we outline aspects of research into tourism mobilities in terms of three inter-related aspects: firstly, materialities, secondly, automobilities and thirdly, new technologies. We recognise that this list is not exhaustive, but we aim to show how the tourism mobilities approach is useful for understanding the importance of tourism research in the contemporary world.

Materialities

In considering the materialities of tourism mobilities it is perhaps useful to examine notions of heritage tourism from this perspective. Studies of heritage tourism *per se* are sometimes too static, focusing on particular sites of meaning such as museums when, in fact, heritage can often be much more fluid both in tangible and intangible forms. Heritage railways provide us with a good example of the materialities of tourism mobilities, of literally heritage on the move (Schivelbusch, 1986; Lofgren, 2008; Bissell, 2009; Aguiar, 2011). Several critiques have explored different aspects of railway mobility, such as the role of the body and the visual nature of being on the move (Bissell, 2010; Johnson, 2010). The visual experience of railway mobility potentially offers a mobile travel glance which is a more

of a 'cinematic' experience of movinglandscape images for the tourist who is corporeally, largely an immobile 'armchair'spectator (Larsen, 2001). Moreover, Roy and Hannam (2012: 7) note that:

One of the most significant performances that the DHR [Darjeeling Himalayan Railway] induces because of its track and its relatively slow speeds is that one can get on and off the train while it is still on the move, and it is in this process that we argue that the DHR negotiates between place and people, not by being simply a stage for performance but by being itself an actor and taking initiative into this process.

Indeed, Edensor and Holloway (2008) demonstrate the importance of the material rhythms of movement of the tourism experience in their analysis of coach tours in Ireland. Their research "reveals both the reproduction and disturbance, through itinerary and narratives of the coach drivers, of anticipated discourses and visual indexes of commodified Irishness." Central to this "is the ordering of different rhythmic assemblages, which connect and disconnect in multiple ways." They argue that "the rhythmic multiplicity of coach tours involve entanglements of embodiment, affective registers, technologies and materialities" (Edensor and Holloway, 2008: 483).

Studies of the materialities of tourism mobilities also seek to understand how various things move through *time*, caught up in a web of temporal movements and how various practices of tourism involve the movement of inter-related objects – what have been termed the 'material worlds' of tourism (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Basu and Coleman, 2008). There is a growing interest in the ways in which material 'stuff' helps to constitute tourism, and such stuff is always in motion, being assembled and reassembled in changing configurations (Sheller and Urry, 2006).

Much of heritage tourism thus involves fluid performances of 'memory'. This then necessitates researching the material mobilities of photographs, postcards, letters, images, guides, souvenirs and all sorts of gifts. More recent work has explicitly examined the kinds of pictures and objects that people carry with them and use to reassemble memories and practices in the remaking of the intertextual materiality of landscapes through art (Rakic and Lester, 2013). Indeed, John Wiley (2007: 217) argues that the artist "emerges as a moving, rapt subject in a tension spun through and with the lines of the landscape. Landscape, in other words, is a perceiving-with, that *with which* we see, the creative tension of self and world." The very material sensuality of walking in a landscape is highlighted here.

From a mobilities perspective it is the movement of these souvenirs, gifts, works of art and more everyday things that is of particular interest in terms of material cultures. We can see this in the example of the mobility of the seemingly simple object – a spoon or a bracelet made from bomb material into a souvenir from Laos.

Unexploded cluster bombs are a rich source of aluminium that can be collected for scrap or turned into products for sale. In 1975, one farmer set up a business making spoons from the unexploded ordnance. When Elizabeth Suda of the sustainable fashion company Article 22 heard of this local entrepreneur, she committed to work with him and his fellow villagers to produce a more globally marketable product—simple bracelets. In an ironic twist of fate, Elizabeth Suda and her sister Wallis sell these bracelets and allow a new generation of Americans to "buy back the bombs". Their collaboration also helps to ensure that the war is no longer a secret (Davies, 2011: 976).

On the one hand these material items are a potent symbol for disarmament, but on the other hand they are also the starting point to understand the complex relationships between conflicts and tourism mobilities.

The materialities of tourism mobilities can perhaps be best seen through the links between tourism and pilgrimage (Coleman and Eade, 2004; Timothy and Olsen, 2006). In his case study of migrant Buddhist monks from Thailand, Pattana Kitiarsa (2010: 257) argues that their cross-border religious missions and aspects of their religious practices in Singapore illustrate the role of religion in the broader context of transnational mobility and settlement in a multiracial and multicultural city-state. Furthermore in her paper 'Gifting Mecca', Erin Kenny (2007: 363) analyses pilgrimage and its gifts, linking heritage and tourism mobilities. She argues that in the "extended family households of Kankan, participation in pilgrimage creates a new kind of globally implicated person and also may influence the relative status of other members of the household" (Kenny, 2007: 363). Sattar et al., (2013) also discuss the how religious travel for first-generation Muslim Pakistanis is influenced by Islamic principles and practices associated with obligations to travel to meet with friends and relatives. Such religious obligations to travel are considered as a key factor influencing visiting friends and relatives (VFR) mobilities at a local and national level in the UK. Travel thus involves the movement of spiritual and material capital for some but all of this is predicated on the use of various modes of transport, to which we now turn.

Automobilities

From a tourism perspective, the mobilities paradigm has arguably provided a critical perspective on the emergent tourism geographies instigated by different modes of travel. In particular, 'aeromobility' (Urry 2007: 155) and 'automobility' (Featherstone, 2004: 1), the dominant forms of travel today have rapidly developed to become important topics of debate in the social sciences. However, although Urry (2012: 27) has argued that the 'automobility system' is now "central to contemporary economy and culture," tourism's dynamic relationship with automobilities has frequently resided on the periphery of tourism research.

In terms of tourism mobilities we argue that the action of travel may be not only to serve a particular purpose but can also act as an integral feature of many tourists' experiential demands (see Bauman, 1998; Butler and Hannam, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Mohktarian and Salomon 2001). *What* transports a tourist can therefore considerably shape or alter the overall tourist experience (Edensor, 2007; Huijbens and Benediktsson, 2007; Larsen, 2001). Indeed, certain vehicles may permit tourists to attain deeper experiences via 'sensescapes' (Larsen, et al., 2006: 268), as they are empowered with new opportunities to feel, hear, or even smell spaces. Thus, we argue that a stronger emphasis on the experiences and demands of tourists travelling *in situ* is required and that the roles of various modes of transport play need to be further conceptualised.

Automobility, in the purest sense, is the simultaneous achievement of autonomy and mobility (Featherstone, 2004) and in contemporary society, the chief purveyor of autonomous movements is undoubtedly the motor car. Indeed, geographers and social scientists have frequently portrayed the motor car as the 'avatar of mobility' (Thrift, 1996: 272), or the 'universal and incontestable' symbol of movement (Bohm et al., 2006: 5). The benefits of automobility have been well documented in academic literature, particularly from a Western vantage point. The car's ability to provide feelings of control and a sense of freedom remain dominant themes. Of course, cars may permit the tourist (and his or her passengers) to choose where or when they stop. They also enable the occupants to choose specific routes that can be tailored to suit spatiotemporal or even experiential demands (Beckmann, 2001; Rajan, 2006; Butler and Hannam, 2012). After all, as Urry (2004: 28) suggests, "cars extend where people can go to and hence what they are literally able to do."

From a more practical perspective, the car offers a range of additional benefits to the driver. The car is seen to be a more reliable alternative to other modes of travel and provides flexibility as well as 24 hour availability (Urry, 2004). Collin-Lange and Benediktsson's (2011) research on the automobilities of young Icelandic motorists noted that many selected cars over buses and trains due to the perception that public modes of transport were inefficient and unreliable. Thus, narratives extolling the automobility-sanctioning powers of the motor car have frequently, and perhaps rather unfairly, juxtaposed them against other modes of transport to emphasise the driver or passenger's acquisition of control and freedom. Larsen (2001) posited that although trains were responsible for the initial mobilisation of tourists, the car has

now taken over this mantle as they provide sensations of unpredictability via the open road. This, of course, is in direct comparison to rigid and freedom-restricting rail tracks that ensure that detours and *ad hoc* stops can seldom be achieved by train passengers (although for a contrasting perspective see Roy and Hannam, 2013). In contrast to the car then, public transportation is deemed to be both “inflexible” and “fragmented” (Urry, 2004: 29). Moreover, Beckmann (2001: 598) has argued that cars can offer tourists access to ‘car-only-sights’ that exist in peripheral locations inaccessible to public transport.

Choosing to travel via public transport is frequently identified as being restrictive and a decision that may ultimately “desensualize” (Edensor 2007: 208) passengers’ experience of their surrounding location. Lumsdon’s (2006) research on bus-using tourists noted that many selected buses because they were perceived as being ‘secure’ and could also remove feelings of worry. Although bus passengers may achieve peace of mind, it is argued that travel experiences are diluted due to the absence of worry. Indeed, Edensor (2007: 203) has suggested that many modes of transport will now “insulate” their passengers and ensure that they are far removed from the chaotic world they stare at through windows in the form of “enclavic touristscapes”.

The car then, may not only induce feelings of control and freedom but in addition, provide a sense of touristic *adventure* (Collin-Lange and Benediktsson, 2011; Edensor, 2004; Farber and Paez, 2009; Huijbens and Benediktsson, 2007; Sheller, 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2000, 2003; Urry, 2004; Vanderheiden, 2006; O’Regan, 2004).
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2012). Indeed, Featherstone (2004: 2) argues that the car empowers the driver with the “cultural dreams of adventure” as he or she can go anywhere and without permission. Access to hedonistic opportunities may also be frequently cited as a key advantage of automobility for tourists. Car journeys can enable a range of emotional or physical exchanges with landscapes, including ‘intimacy’ (Trauer and Ryan, 2005), ‘escapism’ (Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004), ‘anonymity’ (Sheller and Urry, 2000; Hagman, 2003; White and White, 2004; Sager, 2006), ‘solitude’ (Griffiths, 2002; Bull, 2004), or even ‘virtual otherness’ (Larsen, 2001: 81). However, motor cars may provide solutions to a very different range of experiential travel demands.

The car enables drivers and passengers to co-exist in private, controlled spaces (Featherstone, 2004; Pesses, 2010) that act as “sanctuaries” (Maxwell, 2001: 199) or barriers to “neutral and repelling” public spaces (Bull, 2004: 252). The need to avoid public spaces and develop private environments in transit is associated, says Livingstone (2002) and Butler and Hannam (2013a), by a desire to continue private lives away from the gaze of the wider public. Indeed, it has been observed that car-using independent tourists revealed a strong desire to avoid continuous interactions with strangers or other tourists (Butler and Hannam, 2012, 2013b). Instead, their vehicles acted as private ‘places to talk’ (see Collin-Lange and Benediktsson, 2011) with friends or relatives about familiar topics of debate that were linear to those encountered at home. Similarly, car-users are permitted to avoid using formal, behavioural “etiquette” (Urry, 2004: 29) that passengers on public transport must adhere to. However, this privacy can be disrupted by the figure of the hitch-hiker as O’Regan’s (2013) research demonstrates. He argues that “[i]n order to be able to

stay mobile, it is necessary for hitch-hikers to develop ties with drivers and service station workers at varying times and places, a practice that demands human interaction, intimate engagement, exchange and a lot of patience” (O’Regan, 2013: 136).

It has been argued that the car permits humans to interact with surrounding tourism environments in unique ways. Indeed, one can feel through and with the car, as it provides opportunities “to interact with that world through the visual, aural, olfactory, interoceptive and proprioceptive senses” (Sheller and Urry, 2004: 288). Thus, as Thrift (2004: 51) posits, the car is now ‘a world within itself’ and one that is predominantly alien to its immediate surroundings. Climate control and audio systems empower motor car users to manage and tailor tourism sensescapes that may sharply contrast the weather conditions, sounds and smells that envelope them. With regards to soundscapes, cars are now in effect “sophisticated mobile sound machines” (Bull, 2004: 245) that enable passengers to provide personalised soundtracks to the landscapes and cityscapes they traverse. Similarly, developments in mobile communicational and satellite technologies have helped shape the travel experiences of car users. Here, they can navigate new surroundings without issue and find their ways through complex urban entanglements of motorways, roads and backstreets. They can also locate hidden attractions, restaurants, tourist information centres and hotels without the need to unfold the almost redundant road or tourist map. However, one must acknowledge that feelings of *autonomy* may also be hindered rather than enhanced by new car technologies.

Using cars may not only instigate feelings of freedom and adventure but instead promote a range of negative emotions such as fear, frustration, envy, anger, or distress (Sheller, 2004; Thrift, 2004). Beckmann (2001: 598) suggests that society's increasing usage of motor vehicles has transformed roads to become "grounds of battle", as space is increasingly contested. Indeed, the car's promise of freedom and adventure can be ironically hindered by the car, as other road user curtail driving experiences in the form of traffic congestion and via the poor and even dangerous driving techniques of other drivers (Taylor, 2003; Butler and Hannam, 2013a). As Beckman (2001) and Featherstone (2004) have both argued, many drivers are now effectively 'captured' due to a reduction in the driver's ability to control their own freedom. Indeed, Beckmann (2001: 604) argues that automobilisation may have effectively 'turned against itself'. Similarly, Butler and Hannam (2013a), have observed that although expatriate car users would often refer to their motor vehicles as being 'essential,' 'must-haves,' or even 'lifesavers', many reported that their journeys frequently involved severe periods of immobility. As a consequence, car experiences were often considered to be 'annoying,' 'boring,' 'depressing,' or 'soul-destroying' due to traffic congestion.

Cars are also restrictive in other ways. Rajan (2006) argues that the freedom associated with cars is perhaps not as readily available as one may assume. Before one can own or use a car, a range of driving paraphernalia must be acquired, including driving licenses, insurance policies and evidence of adequate car maintenance. Moreover, as Butler and Hannam (2013a: x) note, the car is heavily restricted in terms of where it can actually go, "as a train requires tracks, the car

requires strips of tarmac which are bounded by barriers and control, to some extent, the true autonomy the automobile driver can actually exert.” Car users are governed by rules, road signs and markings that not only restrict velocity but directions and where they can stop. These rules also inhibit many of the normalized daily performances that exist in contemporary society, such as making calls on mobile phones, surfing the internet, and sending messages or emails that are all illegal when driving. Moreover, the politics of automobility may now include a range of other ‘problems’ that need to be navigated, including speed cameras, toll fees and congestion charges. Indeed, parking fines have become an issue for some destinations as many tourists openly ignore these when visiting another country – it has been estimated that more than £500,000 is owed to councils in the south of England from overseas registered vehicles (Vardy, 2013).

While cars permit freedom and control to some extent, others have argued that, like desensualizing public modes of transport (Edensor, 2007), they too can inhibit or remove environmental sensations. Sheller and Urry (2000: 747) suggest that the car may severely restrict the driver or passenger’s ability to experience “the sights, sounds, tastes, temperatures and smells of the city.” Edensor (2004: 110-112) argues that in numerous driving scenarios, drivers will experience a “barely conscious awareness” when in motion due to “mundane choreographies”. From a visual sensory perspective, Taylor (2003: 1611) has also suggested that many driving experiences may only be “blurred and fleeting”, as the driver must concentrate on the road ahead instead of gazing at landscapes or cityscapes. Thus, it is perhaps incorrect to assume that the car is superior to public modes of transport

and that it can fulfil the prerequisite demands of the tourist. Indeed, other studies have conversely observed the experiential benefits of public transport and have revealed that they too can provide unique encounters. Butler and Hannam (2013a: x) noted that public transportation systems in Malaysia provided access to a variety of sensescapes that could essentially “capture everyday life” in a way that cars could not:

Trains were said to be hosts to a variety of different odours (both good and bad) and allowed passengers to engage in journeys which were bumpy as opposed to the fluid, shock-absorbed mobility offered via cars on roads. Moreover, one could literally ‘feel’ the journey as the train jolted between stops and swayed slightly as it negotiated meandering tracks. Open windows, and on occasions where trains were saturated with passengers, open carriage entrances, allowed refreshing breezes to be felt. Such sensations were thus deemed by expatriates to be more ‘authentic’ experiences of Malaysia, particularly due to the scarcity of other Western passengers during the majority of commutes (Butler and Hannam, 2013a, p. x).

Thus the different experiential tourist demands highlighted in this paper cannot be tied to particular mode of transport. Several studies have argued that cars can provide a sense of freedom or adventure in ways that ‘rigid’ trains or buses fail to enable. It has also been argued that enclavic touristscapes have been fostered by various modes of public transport that have desensualised tourist experiences due to the dilution of sensescapes throughout many journeys. Indeed, in many papers, the car is commonly assumed to be a better mode of transport, particularly when one

juxtaposes the automobilities provided by cars in contrast to buses or trains.

However, paradoxically, it has been suggested that the car too has become a sterile and restrictive sanctuary due to its propensity to now remove many of the stresses associated with travel. This shift in view certainly challenges the notions of control and autonomy that have been previously prescribed to them. Here, sound systems, climate control technologies and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) units ensure that the driver and his or her passenger(s) can travel with increasing ease and in greater comfort. This is further discussed in the section below in relation to the impact that new technologies more generally are having on tourism mobilities.

New Technologies

As Makimoto and Manners (1997: 6) had predicted, technological developments (along with other major trends) are enabling people to live “geographically independent” lifestyles, thus allowing more and more individuals to be “free to live where they want and travel as much as they want.” As the physical movement of individuals is freed from geographical constraints, the interdependence of mobility and technology will continue to be of fundamental importance for academic inquiry into current and future tourism practices. Thus tourism mobilities research is responding to the call for “better theorization and research, especially to examine the interdependencies between changes in physical movement and in electronic communications, and especially in their increasing convergence” (Hannam et al., 2006: 4).

Already there is a mounting body of scholarship focused on examining the way new mobile and social technologies – including smartphones, mobile applications, laptop

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and tablet computers, and social media—expand and modify the traditional contours of tourism (Mascheroni, 2007; White and White, 2007; Paris, 2010, 2012; Germann Molz, 2012; Wang, Park, and Fesenmaier, 2012; Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2008). These new technologies are reconfiguring both time and space (Green, 2002) for their users as they become more ubiquitous parts of daily life. Research has illustrated that as information and communication technologies become more advanced and integrated into corporeal travel practices, there is increasing spillover between everyday and ‘vacation’ contexts (MacKay and Vogt, 2012). Forms of virtual, imaginative, and mediated travel considered ‘new’ (Urry, 2000) only a decade ago, are now quite ordinary to a large majority of individuals.

As tourists assimilate mobile technologies into their daily practices and expand these practices into digital spaces, they often replicate and reconfigure their performativities and sociabilities. Tourism can be viewed as a complex ‘assemblage’ (Germann Molz and Paris, forthcoming) of portable technologies, infrastructure, virtual and networked spaces, and bodies that flow through various mobilities. The emergence of cyberspace has reconfigured and mobilized the concept of space itself, where virtual spaces are configured based on human interest rather than physical proximity. For example, Paris (2010) has suggested that there has been a virtualization of backpacker culture where backpackers are able to be fully integrated into multiple networks and maintain a sustained state of co-presence with the backpacker culture online. Virtual backpacker spaces have also been found to provide opportunities for negotiating restricted physical mobility and the development of a sense of community and shared tourism experiences of young Chinese backpackers (Ong and du Cros, 2011).

However, it needs to be emphasized that the convergence of tourism and technology and the hybridization of virtual and physical spaces have further exacerbated the exclusion of large numbers of people. Beyond the exclusion due to lack of access, noted as the 'digital divide', with the hybridization of space these individuals are also excluded from fundamental ways of understanding and experiencing the places they inhabit (Frith, 2012). This results in further inequalities that are important to understand within the context of tourism, particularly for host-guest interactions and the operation of the tourism industry within the 'developing world'.

In addition to creating a more networked patterning of social life, home life, and work life, recent innovations in information and communications technologies (ICT) have increasingly been incorporated into the practice of travel, the tourism experience, and the operation of the tourism industry (see Buhalis and Law, 2008; Leung, Law, van Hoof and Buhalis, 2013; Gretzel, 2011). Examining the nexus between travel and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) through a 'mobilities lens' (Hannam et al., 2006) allows for critical understanding of blurring of the traditional binaries (home/away, authentic/inauthentic, leisure/work, host/guest, extraordinary/mundane, present/absent) on which tourism has been defined and theorized (Hannam and Knox, 2010). These blurrings are "the technology-induced and technology-mediated fusions that have emerged with the new communication technologies...the processes by which cultural practices, lifestyles, and underlying ideologies are reshaped in relation to one another" (Jordan, 2009: 182). Many tourists today are immersed in hybrid spaces of in-betweenness (Rojek and Urry, 1997), leading to a re-articulation of tourism.

The convergence between travel and communication constitutes a key feature of a mobile society and tourism is now representative of this new 'mobility nexus' (Germann Molz and Paris, forthcoming), as tourists are increasingly bringing mobile devices on their journeys and fluidly switching between mediated and corporeal co-presence with distant social networks. For many tourists, creating and maintaining co-presence is now an important part of the travel experience (White and White, 2007), as well as a necessity of social life (Urry, 2003). Individuals maintain personalized networks over large geographical distances (Larsen et al., 2006) through mobile devices, social media, and an expanding infrastructure of wireless connectivity. Advancements in mobile bandwidth and an expansion of Wi-Fi throughout public spaces allow for fluid and almost constant connectivity. This ubiquitous connectivity is reorganizing the geography of social interaction between people and their networks giving rise to what has been called 'networked individualism' (Wellman, 2001).

Tourists are now travelling both on the internet and with the internet (Germann Molz, 2006). For some 'lifestyle travellers' (Cohen, 2011), 'flashpackers' (Paris, 2012; Germann Molz and Paris, forthcoming; Butler and Hannam, 2013b), and other members of the new 'mobile elite' (Bauman, 1998) without a permanent physical abode, an individual's email, blog, Twitter, and/or Facebook are often their only permanent address (Mascheroni, 2007). These same technological advances now allow for greater flexibility of tourist's paths through time and space, allowing for new opportunities of micro-coordination, collective planning, and more open time schedules (Sorensen, 2003) as tourists' personal schedules become more

desynchronized from the traditional travel and tourism timetables through an expansion of personalization technologies.

For many tourists, being physically apart from their social networks is not longer the same as being absent. White and White (2007) explored the simultaneous sense of being away and present for tourists who travel while still being embedded within their social networks through communication technologies. New technologies allow for instant direct socialization, as well as more ambient forms of and co-presence. New virtual moorings in the 'blogosphere' and 'statusphere' (Paris, 2011) allow for tourists to not only stay connected but also facilitate new opportunities of collaboration and interactive travel (Germann Molz, 2012). Common behaviours of sharing travel diaries, photos, videos, and other media have created what Enoch and Grossman (2010: 521) call a virtual "phantasmatic tourist space", where others are "enabled to take an active part in the creation or re-creation of images relating to tourist experience." These spaces provide opportunities for the "socially transmitted representational" (Salazar, 2012: 864), to be mobilized, shared, interacted with, and consumed through virtual networks.

Moreover, mobile devices, mobile connectivity, and social media are not just technological objects used by tourists, but are in themselves social objects (Germann Molz, 2006) and part of a tourists' sociality. Mobile devices and social media enable an individual's social networks with a 'surveilling gaze' through which they can follow, watch, monitor, and track tourists virtually from a distance through constant and often concise 'byte-sized' updates. Tourists are not only sharing their experiences, but also responding to the subsequent 'comments' and 'likes' that they

receive on their social media. Essentially they create virtual travel companions (White and White, 2007). Even when not directly engaging with their various networks, tourists are travelling with and are monitored by the continuous background presence of their social networks (Crawford, 2009). This monitoring is a form of togetherness or interpersonal surveillance, which can provide a sense of shared virtual intimacy which can sometimes be troublesome, emotionally disruptive (White and White, 2007), and generate feelings of discomfort and claustrophobia (Crawford, 2009).

Tourists today must negotiate between maintaining intimacy, togetherness, and distance. As private space becomes rearticulated as 'media space' tourists have developed strategies using social media and mobile devices to control the levels of intimacy and access afforded to their various social networks. For example, many backpackers employ a defensive strategy of keeping their phone off when they want to maintain distance (Mascheroni, 2007; Germann Molz and Paris, forthcoming). In other cases individuals can choose to restrict their posts and communications to their local sphere, by posting to their blogs in their native language, thus restricting access to their friends, family, familiar strangers, and others from their home country (Enoch and Grossman, 2010).

Conversely, mobile users can also use these technologies as 'technologies of separation' (Bull, 2007) to escape their immediate situations or remove themselves from the physicality of social interactions while travelling (Wilken, 2010; Paris, 2012). The close virtual proximity, constant connectivity, and intimacy can all distract individual's attention from their physical experiences. Corporeal proximity does not

always produce 'thick embodied socialities' as individuals may not be accessible or available to those physical close to them. In this sense these new technologies allow individuals to be physically mobile as well as emotionally and mentally at home (White and White, 2007).

The increased intimacy afforded through new technologies is also interrelated with the blurring of the distinction between the extraordinariness of touristic experiences and the mundaneness of everyday life (Cohen and Cohen, 2012). People are sharing even the most mundane experiences while travelling through social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Conversely, tourism is becoming further de-exoticized (Larsen et al., 2007) as people follow and 'co-travel at a distance' with their friends and family through their travels. Constant connectivity has also enhanced the sense of obligation for tourists to maintain a normative level of presence, attention, and intimacy with their friends and family (Larsen et al., 2007). As this connectivity is based upon a physical infrastructure of hardware and software, sometimes tourists are disconnected from their virtual networks as they travel through 'technological dead zones' (Pearce and Gretzel, 2012). This forced or unexpected disconnection can cause anxiety and distress, both for tourists and their virtual networks. For some of the hypermobile elite, being 'unplugged' and denied mobility is unacceptable. Disasters can also disrupt the ability of tourists to connect to their networks and increase the anxiety of loved ones. This can lead to interesting cases of online social convergence of tourists virtual networks from which the tourists themselves are momentarily absent from. Social media has been used by tourists and their virtual networks to mobilize geographically distant virtual networks

to collaborate, corroborate, and disseminate collective intelligence during moments of crisis (Paris and Rubin, 2013).

New advancements in social networking technologies have allowed for the decentralization and democratization of tourism information as word-of-mouth communication now moves online. These technologies have sped up and spread out the dissemination of information among tourists (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2007). Within the virtual moorings, where tourism communities can (re)assemble online, the powerful force of 'peer production' enables individuals to create and engage with user generated content, often while travelling, through mobile devices.

The vast amounts of user generated content combined with the immediate access to this content through mobile devices provides tourists with the ability to 'see backstage' and redistributes the power and control of staging and portraying tourism destinations and services (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006). Review websites such as Trip Advisor have tremendous power to impact consumer behaviour because they offer a medium for millions of tourists to provide their own reviews and for these reviews to be corroborated. Additionally, virtual spaces provide a means for the collaborative production of knowledge through decentralized, democratized, and distributed structures such as *Wikitravel.org* (Germann Molz, 2010). These virtual spaces (Paris, 2011) are largely dependent upon 'weak ties' between strangers, but are often highly trusted. Ambient social interactions and passive surveillance through social media, such as Facebook's News Feed, have also been shown to impact consumer behaviour (Lee and Paris, in press).

Complementary advances in geo-based technology, context-aware mobile technologies with 'push' capabilities, recommender and other intelligent information systems (Gretzel, 2011), and location-based social networks have allowed for new opportunities for marketers by allowing them to "offer recommendations relevant to space and time that can shape, change, or alter tourists' spatiotemporal movement at a destination" (Tussyadiah, 2012a: 207). For example, Brown, Kappes, and Marks (2013), presented a method of mitigating theme park crowding through a system that offers incentives and information on mobile devices as a means of routing tourists to less crowded areas of the park.

The use of mobile and social technologies has led to augmentation and hybridization of space, as tourists, destinations, and business are producing new types of places and spatial experiences through these technologies. The proliferation of these technologies supports the further problematization of the notion place.

Advancements in mobile, social, communication, and location based technologies have augmented and mediated tourists' senses and experiences of space through emotional, aesthetical, informational, playful and social enhancements. Some researchers have suggested that these advancements allow for tourists to be more creative (Richards, 2011) and spontaneous (Wang, Park, and Fesenmaier, 2012).

Advances in Location Based Services (LBS) are arguably making places more immersive and captivating for tourists. Location based services have only recently come to prominence (since the introduction of the iPhone and subsequent competing smart phones). Location Based Services use mobile internet access, Global

Positioning Systems (GPS) and a wide range of mobile 'apps' to locate and provide location specific information for people (Frith, 2012). These technologies allow for differentiated forms of personal mobility, personal experience of mobility, and personal control over mobile experiences, as Frith (2012:145) suggests, "by bringing the 'searchability' of the internet into the information contained within physical places, hybrid spaces afford new ways of organizing and filtering experience, transforming the physical city into a database city of sorts, ready to be reordered and personalized." All of these geo-based technological advances have been suggested to help tourists to have more meaningful (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2012) and, even more playful experiences. Many of the popular location based smartphone applications combine elements of social gaming and social networking, such as *Foursquare*, *SCVNGR*, and *Gowalla*. Users of Foursquare for example compete with their social networks for status in form of points, as well as with strangers at destinations, where individuals are able to become a virtual 'mayor' of a specific place. Tussyadiah (2012b) suggests that the social gaming features of location-based media stimulates the basic human behavior of territoriality (Andereck, 1997) and thus impacts tourists' mobilities.

Previously, several researchers pointed to the advancement of 'virtual reality' as a potential threat to physical travel and tourism (Cheong, 1995; Williams and Hobson, 1995). More recently, Guttentag (2010) discussed in detail the role of virtual reality for tourism, and suggest that it has the potential to substitute physical travel.

However, the continued exponential growth of the number of global tourists, despite the continued technological innovations, seems to support the alternative view that

“places are going to be physically travelled to for a long while yet” (Larsen et al., 2007: 259). While physical travel is likely to continue, the increased popularity and amount of leisure time spent exploring MMOGs (Massive Multiplayer Online Games) and other 3D virtual worlds, has some scholars suggesting that they can be treated as ‘digital destinations’ and surrogates for corporeal travel experiences. In doing so, a small body of literature has focused on ‘virtual reality tourism’ within these digital spaces. Gale (2009) suggests that because of the overlap between virtual tourism (within virtual worlds) and physical forms of tourism, virtual worlds could be viewed as a type of ‘themed tourist’ space.

Plunkett (2011) even suggests that people can become attached to virtual places, and virtual worlds could impact the traditional ways of travel particularly as technology advances and the energy footprint of physical travel becomes increasingly important. Virtual worlds could be developed into ‘sustainable tourist spaces’ where there is little impact on the natural environment or fragile heritage sites (Dewailly, 1999). Several researchers have explored the implications of 3D virtual worlds for tourism marketing (Huang et al., 2012). One of the main disadvantages of travel in virtual worlds, though, is that it does not allow people to develop relationships within the real world, and instead requires full immersion into a simulated environment (Kounavis, Kasimati, and Zamani, 2012). New advances in augmented reality (AR), however, may overcome this issue.

Recent advances in the computing power, computer graphics, wireless connectivity, and sensor technologies of smartphones have converged with faster networks and

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cloud computing to make mobile augmented reality more popular and accessible to a mass market (Yovecheva, Buhalis, and Gatzidis, 2012; Linaza et al., 2012). These apps (*Wikitude, Layar, Sekai Camera, Acrossair, and Junaio*) permit for users to browse, search, and overlay virtual 'layers' of spatially relevant information allowing them to browse their surrounding areas through their screens. Many destinations are starting to develop and launch their own Augmented Reality (AR) applications, including Tuscany, Korea, Hong Kong, and Dubai. Trip Advisor has launched a new tool that allows tourists to take a virtual walk through their destinations with information and reviews superimposed over Street View in Google (Linaza et al., 2011).

Mobile Augmented Reality (AR) has been used to enhance tourists' experiences in several ways. Sandvik (2008) noted three processes of augmentation that blur the boundaries between physical and imaginary places: narrativization, fictionalization, and the construction of a 'mixed-reality'. Narrativization occurs when tourists' experiences of an objectively authentic (Wang, 1999) place is augmented through mobile technologies. For example, the Museum of London's *Street Museum* Augmented Reality 'app' allows users to point their phone at a landmark, upon which a historical photo and caption is superimposed. Fictionalization is a process of augmenting a tourists experience using a place as a setting for a work of fiction. Many literary and film-induced tourists, or 'set-jettlers' (Joliveau, 2009), visit locations made famous by popular authors (Herbert, 2001), and mobile Augmented Reality (AR) technologies can now make visits to these 'fictionalized landscapes' more immersive.

Finally, there is also the hybrid mixed reality in which the physical place is augmented with a story space. These can also include the use of Augmented Reality (AR) in the gamification of physical space. One example is the *Bram Stoker's Vampires* gaming app that allows users to find and hunt vampires in Dublin's city centre, which was launched as part of the 2012 Bram Stoker festival. The future of Augmented Reality (AR) is already advancing beyond smartphones as wearable mobile technologies are starting to become available on the consumer market. The upcoming launch of Google's Glass product and the AR contact lens prototype showcased by Innovega (and currently seeking Food and Drug Administration's approval in the United States) suggests that there will be further convergence between individuals, technology, and their physical surroundings, leading to important considerations for the future of tourism mobilities.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to give some insights into the multiple mobilities that may be involved in the study of tourism mobilities. The 'new mobilities paradigm' arguably allows us to place travel and tourism at the centre of social and cultural life rather than at the margins and this paper has discussed how this might be applied in the development of a research agenda for materialities and technologies that constitute tourism mobilities. Nevertheless, there are many other aspects of tourism mobilities from walking to different practices of air travel that could also be considered. Tourism mobilities have had significant impacts on the global environment and these impacts will continue to be felt as emerging economies develop and engage with mobile

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technologies. The transition to a post-carbon future will potentially open up many new technological configurations for tourism mobilities but at present the demand for further automobilities will continue to grow. Moreover, as the recent mobilities and immobilities of global capital continue to suggest, places and politics will remain paramount in our discussions of tourism mobilities.

Researching tourism mobilities can also involve the use of mobile methodologies. Researchers often complain about the problems of doing research outside and of how their recordings with respondents have 'background noise' which makes it difficult to transcribe interviews. While there are computer programmes which will seek to minimize such 'background noise' we contend that such 'noise' is very much part and parcel of doing mobilities research. It is this noise which makes the recordings more intelligible, not less, providing valuable insights into the frictions and turbulence created by mobile people and things. Rather than eliminating or complaining about the noise, we would encourage researchers to actually research the noise, as this is the very stuff of tourism mobilities. Doing mobilities research thus involves paying attention to how people, things and seemingly intangible entities such as ideas are on the move, as well as how environments themselves make a difference.

If we are to adequately understand the ontology of contemporary mobilities then we also need to have mobile methodologies not necessarily to 'capture' but to keep pace with the fluid (dis)order and (dis)embeddedness of (de)territorialized social life

(D'Andrea, 2006). Firstly, "researchers will benefit if they track in various ways –
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including physically travelling with their research subjects – the many and interdependent forms of intermittent movement of people, images, information and objects” (Buscher and Urry, 2009: 103). Secondly, “as a consequence of allowing themselves to be moved by, and to move with, their subjects, researchers are tuned into the social organization of ‘moves’” (Buscher and Urry, 2009: 103).

Such research may provide a new critical window on the mobilities, immobilities and moorings of contemporary social life by utilising innovative, experimental and increasingly sophisticated technologies (Hannam et al., 2006; Fincham et al., 2010; Buscher et al., 2011). However, we also need to make sure that we do not over-animate social life and that we pay attention to both established and innovative methods beyond the social sciences which allow us to examine other histories, artistic and scientific practices (Merriman, 2013). It is equally important to recognise that, “[s]tillness, waiting, slowness and boredom may be just as important to many situations, practices and movements as sensations and experiences of speed, movement, excitement and exhilaration” when doing tourism mobilities research (Merriman, 2013: 16). Mobile methodologies add to our repertoire of techniques for gathering data rather than replacing existing ones, but help to bring alive our understanding of tourism mobilities (Adey et al., 2013).

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