

Tourists in time and space

- mobility tactics and the making of tourist spaces

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ABSTRACT

Tourism studies have directed much effort into defining 'the tourist experience' by reference to the phenomenological character of tourist experiences, whether the strategy have been to draw up typologies of tourists or modes of experiences (Cohen 1979; Smith 1977). Subsequently the central role played by spatial practice in constituting tourism have been neglected (Edensor 2000a; Haldrup 2001). This neglect of the dimension of practice to that of experience is most pronounced in relation to the topic of corporeal mobility.

A central element in any kind of tourism, is the involvement with extensive sociotechnological networks of trains, cars, airports, planes, ferrys, highways, hiking trails etc.. But while corporeal mobility is the single most apparent characteristic of tourism, the role of mobility in constituting the performance of tourism has until recently been left unnoticed by social theorists dealing with this subject matter (Aitchinson et al 2000; p 29). Hence studies of how mobility to, from and between attractions, sites, holiday residence etc. are relatively sparse (however see: Pearce 1988 and Aransson; 1997), let alone studies of how the sensuous experience of corporeal travel makes part of the Tourist experience (for an exception see Larsen 2001).

In this paper I will discuss the interrelation between forms of mobility and tourism time-space tactics. I will do this by drawing on examples from an on-going research project on tourism practices and vacationing in Denmark. In the first section of the paper I will discuss the role played by mobile technologies in constituting tourism. Secondly, I will show how changes in tourist practices related to summer house vacationing in Denmark, have been shaped historically. In continuation of this I will draw on Michel de Certeaus distinction between place and space, in order to consider the contrast between place image and the multiple mobile technologies that is involved in summerhouse based vacationing. Thirdly, I will demonstrate how very different time-space tactics are employed by tourists vacationing in Denmark. In doing this I will draw on diaries completed by summerhouse residents along the north-western coastline of Denmark. Finally, I will discuss the divergent roles played by mobile technologies in these diverse tactics as mediators of experience between body and space.