

Ethnology and tourism

The opportunity to go on holiday and be a tourist, at least once a year, has become a normal part of the lives of hundreds of millions of people on our planet in recent years. The emergence of modern tourism can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century, when population development, the growth of cities, industrialization and the improvement of transport networks, accompanied by an increase in real incomes and improved social and labour conditions (Gyr 2001: 471), brought about structural changes in society that made it possible for people to spend their free time travelling. Initially, travelling was reserved for the upper classes, but, over time, tourism has become a mass pastime and, today, it is an activity that relates to all strata of the populations of developed countries. The number of tourist journeys has increased each year, and tourism is a form of mobility that seems to have become omnipresent (or, at least, seemed omnipresent before the Covid-19 pandemic, which has demonstrated that many of the activities we consider 'normal' or 'commonplace', and feel entitled to, aren't necessarily so). If nothing else, the quantitative increase in tourism constitutes a powerful incentive to explore this issue, at least from the perspective of ethnology/anthropology.

Anthropological research on tourism dates back to the 1970s, when the fundamental works of Erik Cohen, one of the pioneers of tourism research, were first published (Cohen 1972). The growth in the volume, diversity and specialization of tourist activity in recent years has been reflected in the number of studies, books, theories and methodologies that have been increasingly devoted to the subject. In her book, which can be regarded as an introduction to the study of the anthropology of tourism, Barbora Půtová lists eight approaches to the study of this phenomenon (Půtová 2019: 56–68), which are characterized by 'differing interpretations and various understandings of the causes and especially the motives related to the origin and development of tourism' (Půtová 2019: 56). The first of these approaches regards tourism as a search for something sacred, a ritual, or a pilgrimage, whereby the tourist steps out of their everyday life and goes through a liminal tourist phase, only to return to their habitual existence after the tourist experience. The second approach sees tourism as a means of socio-cultural, economic and environmental change, in the sense of the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the hosts and their culture. Another perspective is to understand tourism as neo-colonialism and imperialism, focusing primarily on the power asymmetries between developed and less developed countries. The fourth approach views tourism as a generator of ways and forms of creating ethnic relations and cultural identities, and the fifth perceives tourism as an escape from everyday life. The sixth sees tourism as a means of seeking out and gaining experiences, while, at the same time, com-

binning the experience of both the visited country and the tourist's own country. However, another approach perceives it as a form of social therapy, in the sense of rest. The eighth and final approach sees tourism as aid in helping build and strengthen identity, ego and social status. Some of the above-mentioned approaches to the study of tourism feature in this monothematic issue of *Český lid*.

The impetus for this issue was the international interdisciplinary conference *Žvědavost, nostalgie, nutnost? Kulturně antropologické a etnologické pohledy na východní Evropu jako destinaci / Neugier, Nostalgie, Notwendigkeit? Kultur-anthropologisch-volkskundliche Perspektiven auf das östliche Europa als Destination* [Curiosity, Nostalgia, Necessity? Cultural anthropological and ethnological views on Eastern Europe as a destination], which was jointly organized by the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the *Fachkommission für Volkskunde des Johann Gottfried Herder-Forschungsrats* of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and the Moravian Museum in Brno, and took place in the autumn of 2019. This monothematic issue contains five case studies, two of which were presented at the above-mentioned conference.

The studies in this issue cover the period from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. Each examines a different kind of tourism (spa tourism, *Heimat* / 'homesick' tourism, a particular form of dark tourism, alpine tourism and ethno-tourism). Geographically, it covers Europe and South America. The focus of attention of the individual studies is the tourists, their hosts and the mutual relations between them. They analyse representations of tourist experiences and examine tourism in connection with issues of memory and identity.

In her cultural-historical study, **Elisabeth Fendl** focuses on a significant segment of the tourist industry, namely spa tourism. On the basis of preserved ego-documents, she reconstructs the course of visitors' stays in spas at the beginning of the 20th century. She depicts the spa guest's view of life in the microcosm of the spa town and also describes the role of these spa visits in terms of status for the bourgeoisie during this period. **Jana Nosková** and **Sandra Kreisslová** cast light on the issue of 'meeting others' in the bilaterally divided world of the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. They address the issue with the example of Sudeten Germans, who, at that time, were returning as tourists to Czechoslovakia (their former homeland) and wrote reports of their travels in the pages of magazines they published. This *Heimattourism* ['Home-sick tourism'] and the reports of their travels are interpreted as strategies for coping with the loss of their homeland. **Uwe Baumann's** study takes us to South-eastern Europe. He deals with monuments commemorating Partisan battles in former Yugoslavia during World War II and observes how their function has changed in recent years, as the memorials have now become tourist destinations. With the example of one particular monument and its visual representation in an online space, he connects tourism research with the issue of

negotiating the interpretation of history in a given geographical space, which is shaped by various dissonances. The studies by **Ruth Weiland** and **Dima Salibová** are dedicated to the mutual influence of tourists and the inhabitants of the places they travel to. **Ruth Weiland** illustrates this with the example of the Bergsteigerdörfer initiative, which brings together a number of villages and towns in the Alps with the aim of promoting sustainable tourism. By means of publications, promotions and everyday practices, this initiative creates images of ‘the ideal tourist’, and it is the analysis of these images that constitutes the focus of the study. The country that **Dima Salibová** takes us to is (at least, from a Central European perspective) ‘the most exotic’ of those in this issue, insofar as it lies far away across the sea. The theme of her analysis relates to tourists visiting the Shuar tribe in Ecuador from ‘Western countries’ for an authentic experience of indigenous culture, more specifically for the *Natemamu* rituals. The author deals with the processes of commodification and the changes in the rituals after they have been offered for ‘commercial’ purposes for tourism. She examines the (ideational and material) changes experienced by both the local inhabitants and the visiting tourists.

This monothematic issue of *Český lid* is not able to present all contemporary research on tourism. Nevertheless, along with the four studies from the conference that were published in the monothematic issue of *Národopisná revue* (Vol. 30, No. 2, 2020), we believe it gives a certain picture of research into this phenomenon in Central Europe and can stimulate further investigation.

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Jana Nosková

Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Department of Memory Studies
Brno, Czech Republic

Sarah Scholl-Schneider

Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Rheinland-Pfalz
Mainz, Deutschland

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