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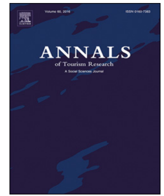
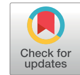


Anthropological contributions to tourism studies



Antonio-Miguel Nogués-Pedregal

Universitas Miguel Hernández, Avda. de la Universidad (Edif. Torreblanca), s/n, 03202 Elche, Spain

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ABSTRACT

What have we learned since anthropologists first realized that tourists alter the societies they study? Intended for non-anthropologists, this paper explores this question and critiques the hegemony of business perspectives in tourism studies. It discusses tourism as a complex and fluid set of phenomena that cannot be reduced to one dimension, highlighting five points: (1) Tourism is one of the names of power. (2) The complex nature of tourism cannot be understood without studying socio-cultural processes. (3) The socio-ecological processes that construct territory determine and are determined by social space. (4) The industries of seduction create a corpus of desires through which socio-cultural groups forge their own identity. (5) Anthropological studies allow researchers to propose alternative forms of tourism development.

Introduction[1]

In the early 1920s Robert Redfield went some 70 km south of Mexico City to do ethnographic fieldwork. He immersed himself, together with his wife, Margaret Lucy Park, in the everyday life of the town of Tepoztlán. His studies focused primarily on cultural change and the relationship between urban and 'folk' cultures. A few years later he moved to Yucatán. But he soon discovered that outsiders were overtly present in that region. In *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (1941) he wrote what was probably the first ethnographic account published in English of the early impact of visitors and the 'commercialization' of traditional fiestas. It is worth quoting at length.

> "The festival of Chicxulub was until recently a very minor affair. But in the 1930's the coastal strip east of Progreso experienced a boom. This occurred because it became fashionable for people with money to spend some weeks during the hottest part of the summer on the seacoast. The automobile road to Progreso was opened in 1928. The summer colony grew, and people of the middle class also came to enjoy a vacation on the seashore. From Progreso the *temporadistas* spread to other settlements on the coast. They began to attend those local festivals which happen to fall in the summer season. The increasing size of the crowds attracted vendors from Mérida and elsewhere. The municipal governments of these settlements began to develop the festival as to realize on the commercial possibilities. Competition grew keen. In 1934 it is said that over ten thousand people visited Chicxulub on a single day of the festival. The fiesta of Seyé happened to fall on the same date and was that year a complete failure. In order to compete with Chicxulub, Chelem changed the date of its festival from the date proper to it according to the calendar saints to a day falling before the fiesta of Chicxulub. But by this time Chicxulub had become the fashionable place to go, and the attempt of Chelem failed.
>
> The fiesta in Chicxulub still centers around a novenario, corridas, and dances. It is possible for a pious person to make offerings to the santo (here a Virgin) and even to contribute a bull to the bullfight in the spirit of a vow. But the religious aspect of the fiesta

E-mail address: amnogues@umh.es.

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has been reduced to almost nothing. The novenario is in the hands of women, chiefly from the community. They do little more than decorate the church and arrange the rosaries. They receive no assistance from the municipal authorities who are busy promoting the secular festival. Occasionally some of the summer residents help decorate the altar 'just for fun'. The secular festival has become the chief enterprise and the biggest business of the village. The date is now fixed for that Sunday in August when the moon is at its best. At this time the summer season is at it [sic] height. The authorities spend money in building an ample bull ring [sic] and a large platform for dancing and in hiring musicians and professional bullfighters. But there is a large income from paid admissions. The jarana has been reduced to a very small affair; few people who come to Chicxulub wish to dance the jarana. Most of the visitors are young people from Merida. They have no thought for the Virgin and every thought for having a good time. They attend in large numbers the modern dances (bailes) […] In 1934, when these coastal villages were experiencing a boom, there was a movement to call the principal festivals of the patron saints 'fairs' instead of 'festivals of saint'. It was proposed that each community name its festival after some conspicuous local product –the cedar, the *ji'cama*, etc. The village of Komchen did in fact hold a 'Maize Fair' consisting of 'dances, bullfights, and other pleasures'. Some journalists in Merida praised the movement and tried to find in the alleged fact that the ancient Mayas had a 'beautiful succession of agricultural festivals' a justification for the change. So when secularization has destroyed the old meanings do reason and rationalization invent new ones".

(Redfield, 1941: 300–302)

Interestingly, the main research topics in the cluster of sociological and anthropological themes on tourism identified by Benckendorff & Zehrer (2013, p. 133) were present in Redfield's description, as exposed by some of the most recent meta-analyses on the literature (Hernández-Ramírez, 2015; Montero, 2018; Pereiro & Fernandes, 2018; Xiao, Jafari, Cloke, & Tribe, 2013). In his account, Redfield looked at affluent social groups, leisure activities, products adapted to new customers, the appearance of new meanings, commercialization, authenticity, secularization, city branding, etc. About twenty years later, Theron Nuñez, following George Foster's recommendation that he "do something on tourism", also went to Mexico, did fieldwork in Cajitlán (Jalisco) and published, in the journal *Ethnology*, what is commonly considered the first anthropology article about tourism (Nuñez, 1963). Almost a decade afterwards, also in *Ethnology*, Davydd Greenwood (1972) explored the commodification of culture in the context of tourism. In 1975 Ben Finney and Karen Watson edited the volume *A New Kind of Sugar: Tourism in the Pacific* (1975) in which contributors debated whether the effects of tourism were negative, positive or unavoidable. Then, in 1977, Valene Smith edited the now-classic *Hosts and guests: the anthropology of tourism*, which did a great deal to consolidate the field's legitimacy. However, despite important contributions (Graburn, 1983), this area of research remained relatively minor. In fact, the relative dearth of research in this field prompted Jeremy Boissevain (1986) to wonder whether anthropologists had unwittingly included tourists in the category of outsiders (such as missionaries, plantation owners, and colonial officers) that, in Malinowski's time, tended to be ignored because they interfered with the researcher's fieldwork and affected the communities studied. Here it is worth recalling Lévi-Strauss's legendary first line of *Tristes tropiques*: "Travel and travellers are two things I loathe –and yet here I am, all set to tell the story of my expeditions" (Lévi-Strauss, 1961, p. 17). Those days are gone. Tourism and tourists are no longer neglected and anthropological perspectives have become well established among scholars interested in tourism studies (Canosa, Moyle, Moyle, & Weiler, 2018). Since the early days anthropologists "have drawn on work from other fields, as well as their own, and they have used theories and methodologies with little concern for disciplinary origins" (Nash & Smith, 1991). Yet, certain broad trends have been detected in anthropological research in this area. The analysis of the first 40 years of *Annals of Tourism Research* (Xiao et al., 2013) –credited as the most relevant journal among tourism scholars trained in qualitative social sciences (Ballantyne, Packer, & Axelsen, 2009, p. 151)—concluded that anthropologists pay attention to topics related to insider-outsider/host-guest relationships, such as commoditization, authenticity, resident attitudes/perceptions, identities, cultural heritage, imaginaries and local development.

The very nature of these topics, however, reveals an interesting finding: the vast majority of studies that call themselves anthropological describe social and cultural processes *in* specific tourism settings. The preposition *in* needs to be underlined because social and cultural anthropology that seeks to understand tourism mostly does its ethnography *in* a specific territory (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015, p. 38). And it observes what happens during, and as a consequence of, the encounters between a resident population and another, visiting population –which Jeremy Boissevain referred to, very aptly, as *insiders* and *outsiders* (Boissevain, 1996). From an anthropological perspective, studying tourism –i.e. object of study—implies analysing the set of socio-technical practices and devices that, bringing together the desirable and the feasible, enable individuals pertaining to certain social groups to spend their leisure time away from their usual routine. It also examines what they do (practices) in those destinations and the social processes that their presence brings about in the territory they visit and that, since it is a territory, is occupied by a human group that considers it its own. Moreover, it does so by considering tourism as a context, with a particular time-space scaffolding (chronotope), and not as an external agent or a globalizing industry.

A visiting population has the particularity of being seasonal and, except in the case of repeaters, it is sporadic and anonymous for the resident population. Although some interesting work has been done (Frohlick & Harrison, 2008; Martín Cabello, 2014; Palmer, 2005), the truth is very few studies that can be considered ethnographic –using the term not as a "modish substitute of qualitative" (Ingold, 2014, p. 384) but as a reference to ethnography's "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973)— look at the experience of the tourist as a social agent in a specific setting. Because even those that do not examine –in a strict sense– the interaction between insiders and outsiders, such as, for example, ethnography on the employment situation of people working in the tourism sector, the study is usually conducted from the perspective of the subalternity produced by the tourism system (Cañada, 2015; Galán, Martín, Ruiz, & Mandly Robles, 1977). In short, "anthropology appears to have been 'slow off the mark', so to speak, in its attempt to understand tourism's central protagonists, tourists, or the theoretical frameworks they have come to inhabit in terms of experience, embodiment, symbolic and semiotic analyses, or material cultures" (Roberts & Andrews, 2013, p. 25). And it has been even slower in studying the

intermediaries in the host-guest encounter, namely those who work in the tourism industry such as tourist guides or hotel owners. Fortunately, this is not the case nowadays.

Perhaps this generalisation should exclude the studies conducted by anthropologists associated with schools of management and hospitality, because researchers there are limited in their anthropological potential by an academic setting governed by the need to demonstrate the professional nature of the results and their relevance to the tourism industry (Lugosi, 2009).

In a way, the probably inevitable tendency towards particularism in anthropological studies on tourism (Hernández-Ramírez, 2015, p. 322) and the expansion of case-study methodologies in the field (Xiao & Smith, 2006, p. 739) have led some authors to write –somewhat hastily and quite unaware of the epistemological and methodological differences— that in tourism social science research "[n]o profound conceptualisations are made, nor are any clear processes identified whereby the dimensions of relationships are made operational" (Merinero-Rodríguez & Pulido-Fernández, 2016, p. 124).

Tourism scholars are well aware that business- and management-oriented perspectives are "gaining increasing leverage in the overall tourism research agenda" (Nash, 2007) and that some of these perspectives have examined the social and cultural consequences of what often amounts to the unbridled development of tourism (Mason, 2003; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). They are also aware that the Foucauldian relation between knowledge production and power is overtly present in tourism studies (Tribe & Liburd, 2016) and that broad social and political trends are closely linked to specific shifts in sociological inquiry in tourism studies (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Moreover, the planetary system of metropoles and margins has led Jasmin Habib (2017) –in her response to Noel Salazar's (2017) critique of Anglophone hegemony in tourism studies— to wonder if the works that are not fully considered would make us think differently about tourism studies. In addition, somehow more provocatively, she wonders whether there is something new that We –*pluralis maiestatis* for metropole scholars– are missing because of this imbalanced relationship.

Statements like these triggered the writing of this article. Are they simply gratuitous affirmations born of ignorance, or do they indicate the incapacity of the social and human sciences to illustrate the value of their conclusions in a research field dominated by the business perspective? Are the power relations that shape knowledge in the study of tourism (Tribe, 2010) so decisive that we can really only conclude that *here, in this village also, the light comes on when the switch is turned on*[2]? Is it perhaps that the ultimate goal of anthropological knowledge is, as Clifford Geertz wrote, "not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said" (Geertz, 1973: 30)? My intention is not to give yet another state-of-the-art review of the anthropology and sociology of tourism (Crick, 1989; Dann, 2005; Graburn, Barreto, Steil, de Azeredo Grünewald, & dos Santos, 2009; Roberts & Andrews, 2013) nor to describe in full extension all what we have learned after so many anthropological studies on tourism. Rather to briefly discuss the significance of five anthropological findings, key points or insights to the knowledge of tourism studies since Redfield's early descriptions.

What have we learned about tourism thanks to anthropological studies?

Though the figures are probably somewhat inflated, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that the tourism sector represents 10.4% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3.8% of employment around the world in 2017. Countries make enormous efforts in this area, if not to control tourism flows per se –such flows are in the hands of private agents working in the tourism industry anyway– or to oversee the economic activity derived from them, at least to monitor the indicators used in the creation of the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA). The TSA is a tool used to analyse market dynamics and, in the best of cases, it helps to assess the effectiveness of the public policies obsessed with increasing the accounting figures of the tourism business. Indeed, the UNWTO describes the TSA as a programme "committed to developing tourism measurement for furthering knowledge of the sector, monitoring progress, evaluating impact, promoting results-focused management, and highlighting strategic issues for policy objectives" (UNWTO, 2018).

The use of national accounts systems is on the rise and even a quick glance at the accounts reveals that tourism is booming in many countries. One indication of the central role that the tourism sector will play in the future is the fact that news items about tourism tend to be heavily seasoned with hotel occupancy figures, the number of visitors expected in this or that city, occupancy levels at ski resorts, reservations at rural destinations and growth in hiring. This is a locutionary reality that reduces tourism to one of the two sides of the reality of which Agustín García Calvo (2005) spoke[3]: to the side that presents linguistic production as Reality. This leads to the belief that understanding tourism requires nothing but a detailed knowledge of the management figures that comprise it. The tendency to limit knowledge of the tourism phenomenon to these figures is probably the most pernicious obstacle faced by those scholars among us who consider the number of transactions and the technicalities of the worldwide tourism system to be secondary; they are, at most, the backdrop of the processes that truly interest us.

As mentioned earlier, academic anthropology had been around for only a few decades when Redfield, in a clear and simple fashion, broached the anthropological question of tourism. The arrival of tourists had heightened the interest of local entrepreneurs

[2] During an informal conversation at the ISA World conference in Gothenburg in 2010, an experienced professor in the sociology of tourism confessed to me his belief that 99% of our social science enquiries can –or maybe should– aspire only to show that "here, also in this village, the light comes on when the switch is turned on".

[3] García Calvo refers to Reality as the impossible covenant between "the world of which we speak" (the discursive dimension of the linguistic production of differences and their management), and "the world from which we speak" (the expressive dimension of social communication and distinctive identities).

(those who –depending on the community's distribution of the different capitals within the social space– had the capacity to be entrepreneurial and innovative) in traditional festivities, or *fiestas*. Because of this situation, local authorities developed an interest in controlling the flow of new relationships, in creating elements, giving them names and administering them. They invented a *fiesta*, dressed it up fancy and decided that it should be celebrated at a time convenient for the outsiders. This situation was not acceptable to those social groups who traditionally monopolized the symbolic capital among the villagers, and protested the secularization of society and what they considered a loss of values. Some outsiders, fans of a more direct involvement in the community, liked to take part in the event with the locals. To put it briefly, Redfield described how the previous framework of meaning, the agrarian chronotope, which since time immemorial had stitched together cultural-ecological rhythms that followed the agricultural calendar, was being adapted, because of an external agent, to the new vacation calendar that was perceived as an opportunity to modernize the town.

To put it another way, some elements of popular expressive culture were transformed into heritage assets because they started to be managed according to stakeholders' interests. This process, no doubt facilitated by politicians and public bodies that conceive of heritage as a source of income, led to the decision to valorise these elements and allocate financial resources to this end. This positioned the fiesta competitively in the new industry for outsiders, but it also meant that more of these decisions would have to be made, bringing to the social space a play of interests hitherto unknown. In other words, the fiesta had been commercialized to the point of becoming pure spectacle. The process of rationalising the community's activities and secularising its spectacles was consummated; the expropriation of identity elements from the subordinate groups was also consummated; the authenticity of symbolic-religious expressions gave way to staged authenticity; and the logic of political-mercantile interests in community governance became hegemonic, including the prioritization of some cultural elements to the detriment of others: patrimonialisation.

Reading Redfield in this way, we may wonder whether, apart from showing that in all Tizimín and Chicxulub communities *the light goes on when the switch is turned on*, anthropologists studying tourism have done more than simply create a multitude of different terms with which to speak about the same processes: mercantilisation, heritagisation or patrimonialisation, touristification, identity estrangement, symbolic alienation, authenticity, … in short "making a big mess of words" (Gabilondo, 2013). We believe they have and some of their contributions are outlined below.

First contribution: tourism is one of the names of power

Probably the most important knowledge gained by researchers from other disciplines when they read anthropological papers is that Tourism is one of the names of Power. Fortunately, this statement surprises fewer and fewer scholars nowadays, but it has not always been clear and, in fact, a major epistemological reorganization has been necessary in order to assimilate it (MacLeod & Carrier, 2010). To begin, the introduction of post-structuralist thought in tourism studies (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Urry, 1990) made it evident that what we know as Tourism –with a capital T— is not a defined or definable entity or agent. Rather, the word refers to a set of socio-technological mechanisms –very well-organised and greased to perfection within the broader framework of modernisation and the society of spectacle (Debord, 1967)— that awaken a desire to travel and also facilitate the transport, accommodations, feeding and entertainment of individuals pertaining to *certain* social groups outside of their everyday life.

After decades studying the presence of tourists in so many latitudes, social science has learned that what we call Tourism is nothing if not a complex web of socio-economic processes that range from the imaginary construction of destinations as places of recreation and leisure to the neocolonial implantation of the tourist industry. These processes also include changes in land and resource ownership and the transformation of territories, forms of social stratification, the market and modes of work and income distribution (Galán et al., 1977; Gascón & Ojeda, 2014). This vast web is in turn an area in which different types of capital are exchanged and altered in their composition, distribution and volume (Bourdieu, 2005) and also a political-economic arena in which power groups, factions and parties settle their opposing interests. It is a highly complex whole containing myriad facets and dynamics but, maybe because it is more convenient or perhaps due to the influence of other disciplines, we often treat as a single phenomenon: Tourism. Here we capitalize the word to convey that it is almost always presented as a given, as something not questioned, as an idea that simply rules the world (García Calvo, 1989). Unfortunately, although using a single term is certainly more manageable –both conceptually and textually– it is in fact a linguistic trap, because, despite all the progress made, it limits the potential of the anthropological perspectives.

Thanks to the countless studies done of all the Tizimín and Chicxulub that are or ever have been, we can identify almost all of the socio-technological mechanisms that make tourist' mobilities desirable and possible (Dann & Liebman Parrinello, 2009). These anthropological monographs have untangled many aspects of Tourism. They have shown that it is a complex web of social relationships that can exert transnational pressure on the real estate, based on the promissory argument of residential tourism as a guarantee of socio-economic development (Demajorovic, Aledo Tur, Landi, & Mantovani Kondo, 2011; Jurdao Arrones, 1979) or determine the occupational status of hotel workers (Cañada, 2015), to mention just two examples in *apparently* very different scales. Although in business and economically-oriented analyses, these two examples fall into different economic scales, few sociologists or anthropologists will accept that, for this analytical reason, they belong to two spheres that are infinitely and gnoseologically distant from each other. In fact, anthropological studies uncover the intimate connections running through the causal sequence of the two examples, connections that certain disciplinary positions find awkward or impossible to address.

Its ability to have an effect on such a wide range of territories and socio-cultural processes has led some scholars to describe Tourism as capitalism's most perfect and sophisticated creation (Böröcz, 1992; Nogués-Pedregal, 2012). This is not just because Tourism consumes places and territories, sculpts landscapes and propagates relations of dependence, but also because it produces desirabilities and meanings. In particular, because it transforms the *place* through the mediation of tourism space, updating places

and rhythms in accordance with principles defined by the Global Market. In my view, to say that Tourism is one of the names of Power is not quite the same as addressing the relationship between tourism and power –as if we were talking about *realities* outside of one another. Nor is it the same as addressing power relations in tourism – as if social relations were not all power relations anyway.

Only the qualitative nature and ethnographic depth of anthropological studies have made it possible to understand the power interrelations (Amer Fernández, 2006; Cheong & Miller, 2000) that permeate the system of agents and capitals being used –i.e. those social, economic, cultural, symbolic resources that each agent uses to play within a specific arena. And these studies have little to do with the type of elements of the tourism system identified by pioneers such as Allister Mathieson and Geoffrey Wall (1982) and which, with only minor updates in their functionalist philosophy, still dominate in business and tourism schools.

Second contribution: the tourism setting is primarily territory

The second finding moves along the same lines as the foregoing. Anthropological studies have shown, beyond any theoretical saturation point, that the complexity of the tourism phenomenon cannot be understood –not even in its most entrepreneurial aspects– without understanding the social and cultural processes that occur in the tourism setting.

While all human activity necessarily takes place in space and time, few activities are more closely linked to the use of space than Tourism, as geographers have extensively and thoroughly shown (Butler, 2004; Gómez Piñeiro, 2005). Tourism frequently seeks to neo-colonialize 'quality space' (Gaviria, 1974), as illustrated by the transnational mobilities linked with second-home or residential tourism (Lizarraga, Mantecón, & Huete, 2015). If anything distinguishes tourism practices from other type of activities, it is that they carry with them the consumption of a qualitatively different time and space: leisure time and *territory*. What is important here is not whether tourism modes like conference tourism or incentive-based tourism –or any other kind of tourism linked to the professional world and arranged by marketing experts— can be considered leisure time; what needs to be underlined here is the term *territory*.

In the specialized literature, it is not unusual to find econocentric studies that approach Tourism as a set of leisure activities that use space: Space, mentioned just like that, in an abstract sense. Very few take into consideration that this space is occupied –more or less densely– by a human group and that it is always vindicated –more or less intensely–by this group (Coleman & Collins, 2006; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2012). That is, few econocentric studies include as an indicator the idea that Tourism consumes territory, not space. Yet, as Antonio Mandly puts it, cultures build their territories over a space, they mark them with toponyms and qualify them in terms of beliefs, values, ideologies, *and they give them meaning*. They thus turn them into *places* when they beautify or deteriorate them, live in them and remember them (italics are mine Mandly Robles, 2002: 108).

Anthropological studies on tourism have shown that, as we already knew (cf. García García, 1976; Lefebvre, 1974), territory is a very complex social construction in which the many cultural-ecological practices and interrelations that constitute a society intervene. But these studies also show that it is precisely this complexity that determines the costs of the business related to tourism activities (Beni, 1997). In other words, social science research has helped us to understand the time sensitivity distilled by land and landscape for the different human groups that live there and also to comprehend that tourism consumes territories. Tourism consumes territories when it facilitates swimming on the beach of a 'deserted' island in the South Pacific, or when it transforms a city's streets into a theme park (Yanes Torrado, 2009), gentrifies a historic downtown (Hiernaux-Nicolas & González Gómez, 2014), or provokes social reactions like those seen in Venice (Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri, 2017, pp. 91–93) and in the neighbourhood protest movements of Barcelona (Milano, 2017). This consumption of territory can lead to tensions with certain social groups of the local society, in relation to the appropriation and control of resources, because, among other reasons, it "transforms earth into land" (Aledo Tur, 2008). And even in inhospitable polar latitudes, where it would seem that the only thing that matters is the pristine purity of a singular place, these tensions can affect the tourism experience and aesthetic delight in the landscape as much as they affect business profits (Snyder & Stonehouse, 2007).

Third contribution: social space happens in a tourism context

The fact that Tourism consumes territory and not just space leads to another finding: the cultural-ecological processes involved in the construction of territory determine and are determined by social space and as such must be studied with ethnographic profusion.

A critical reading of the scientific literature can give the impression that tourism studies –or *tourismology* as I call it— has fallen prisoner to nominalism and epistemological inversion, in that it confuses notions and concepts that were created for sociological thinking with the reality of concrete things and their everyday management. "The fallacy of misplaced concreteness", Alfred Whitehead called it. Thus, with so much talk about Tourism in the singular –even though in most cases the topic of discussion is really a whole set of objective structures with individual agents, institutions, rules and practices that are social– some scholars have internalised the historicity of Tourism *as if it were* an agent external to and independent of its different trajectories and production contexts. While I am not talking about essentialism in an ontological sense, anthropological investigations have certainly contributed to reducing and even eliminating the epistemological risk of substantialism, and it has rejected the logical acculturation approach of the early days (Nogués-Pedregal, 2014b). Perhaps this is because we are wary of conceptualisations of society and culture as homogeneous, closed and functional entities and we prefer to speak of social space as "the system of relations" (Bourdieu, 1989: 16) and culture as a "heuristic device that we can use to talk about difference" (Appadurai, 1996: 13). The notion 'social space' is the metaphor used by Bourdieu to disrupt the homogeneous and static characteristics often implicit in the notion 'society'. Choosing the notion 'social space' stresses both its multiple dimensions and the constant flux of power struggles. It becomes a multidimensional space constructed by people's daily practices when using, exchanging and distributing different types of resources –which Bourdieu calls 'capitals'—, within different arenas –which Bourdieu calls 'fields'— all the while negotiating the specific rules of the field itself.

Also, we now know that Tourism, as another practice of power, presents a field of positions clearly differentiated from other social fields (Bourdieu, 2005). The anthropological literature shows that structures often presented as objective in the field of tourism, have in fact been historically constituted determinations. It shows that there are dominating and dominated agents and that struggles take place for the conservation or subversion of the field –manifested in the distinctive modes of tourism-related appropriation. It also shows that it has its own reproduction mechanisms, its own set of entry rules, a different set of participation rules and certain consumption and production practices, all of which are identifiable and distinguishable from those of other fields.

Thanks to this broad use of the concept of social field as a heuristic device, anthropological studies of tourism-related interactions between visitors and certain insider social groups confirm that too many nuances and particularities exist for us to speak of Tourism, with a capital T, without blushing. The ethnographic descriptions gathered by Jeremy Boissevain (1996) provide an excellent response to this simplistic and extended standpoint that treats the social phenomenon of tourism just as a commercial exchange. His book illustrates how each tourism context develops dynamics that cannot be explained just by the pattern of opposition between visitors and certain local social groups but rather are shaped by the place's cultural-ecological rhythms, its work structure and the distances that make up the local social space. For example, on the Greek island of Skyros the *kochyliani* (agricultural workers) saw changes in how resources were valued: what had been barren lands became the most sought-after plots and their age-old artisan activity, formerly marginal, became quite lucrative. These changes altered their relative position in the social space. In the Sardinian village of Abbasanta (Italy) the dynamics behind the appropriation of the meaning of a heritage site called *nuraga* Losa revealed that the power struggle did not occur solely –or even mainly– in terms of opposition to visitors. In fact, it was precisely the relationship with tourists occurring in the social space that made comprehensible the political processes. Another illustration is from the cosmopolitan city of Amsterdam, where Mokum, a collective of retired people, appropriated the tourism discourse and showed visitors another side of the city, one based on their life experiences, thus breaking the monopoly that institutions in the social field of tourism had held of the city's image.

As we can see, when anthropology turns its eye to tourism the complexity of the system of actors that comprise the social field of tourism is revealed. And it becomes clear that such complexity has nothing to do with instruments such as the Doxey irritation index, which was developed to measure community responses to a destination's lifecycle, ranging from euphoria to antagonism, and may still be valid to explain social actions, reactions and negotiations, for instance, in city centres of important tourist destinations (Colomb & Novy, 2017). Considering this complexity, social scientists maintain that tourists do not always behave the same way everywhere and that host-guest relations are not always identical. For this reason, to avoid falling into the belief that hosts and visiting populations are homogenous groups and that the latter simply impact and acculturate the former, more and more social scientists prefer to say that they study social and cultural processes that occur *in* tourism contexts.

Fourth contribution: tourism space is a significant mediator

Another general conclusion obtained after so many anthropological contributions to tourismology is the following: Tourism is a means of global communication. That is the thinking of the UNWTO when it includes, among its objectives, the idea that Tourism can promote peace and understanding among nations. Furthermore, when in 2011 the then Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Taleb Rifai, announced that year's World Tourism Day he said:

> “The message on this World Tourism Day is that, thanks to tourism, millions of people from different cultures are being brought together around the world like never before. This interaction between people of different backgrounds and ways of life represents an enormous opportunity to advance tolerance, respect and mutual understanding”
>
> (UNWTO, 2011)

Saying that tourism is a means of communication may be controversial due to the undeniable existence of language barriers. However, if we do not limit the idea of “means of communication” to that for which today's corporate media companies fight, we can see that tourism, as most often studied by anthropologists, is indeed another way to communicate. At the very least, it puts people from different value systems into contact with one another. For some time now we have known that the tourism imaginary –as a compendium of desirabilities produced by certain identifiable historic conditions– has a great influence on the production of the tourist destinations and events, making them materialisations in space and time of the ideals and myths of global society (Chadefaud, 1987). Just as these imaginaries build the tourism experience and the way of gazing the Other (Salazar & Graburn, 2014), they can also alter how a society sees itself (Nogués-Pedregal, 1995). Ultimately, tourism “reveals the way the native population relates to its memories, to its traditions, to its values— in short, to its identity” (Picard, 1995: 46).

If we examine these social imaginaries –whose production is associated with specific historical practices, as Charles Taylor (2002) concedes— in tourism contexts and apply them to other spheres (Gravari-Barbas & Graburn, 2016) or territories (Herrero & Roseman, 2015), we have enough ethnographic evidence to put forward a fourth finding. The industries of seduction, which comprises public and private bodies –and the social media (Hvass & Munar, 2012)—, creates a set of desireabilities and attempts to build values. In certain historical circumstances, these act as significant mediators in the production of imaginaries that take the form of *tourism scenarios*, through which certain social groups of the local population forge their own frame of meaning and, by extension, their own identity expressions.

There are some well-known studies in the area that Malcolm Crick aptly defined as the “semantics of tourist-local interaction” (Crick, 1989: 330). These studies have helped scholars to understand how the production of tourism imaginaries conditions social and cultural processes in consolidated tourism contexts, as shown by the ethnographies about Barcelona (Palou i Rubio, 2011), and also the importance of the *ethnic* becoming an object of desire (Adame Cerón, 2002).

Illustration 1. Graffiti. Seville 2007. *Did I have to die only to save tourism?*
(Taken by Zifra Ra from Flickr)

Along these same lines, in the mid-nineties I developed a hypothesis about tourism as a mediator in the production of meanings. Although this hypothesis does not emphasize the same processes as more semiological currents do, it can be considered closely related to them. To avoid reification and to underline the dialogic process of the mediation, I described the working hypothesis as the *conversion of place through tourism space*. This hypothesis offers a theoretical framework with which to explain the processes by which place is progressively understood, perceived, shaped and lived by locals *through* the social imaginaries historically generated by the dialogue between *insiders* and *outsiders* in a tourism context. It is heavily influenced by the concept 'touristification' (Picard, 1995, p. 57), by Chadefaud's view on the production of tourism space and, especially, by Bakhtin's concept 'chronotope', the framework in which the time sensitivity –places and rhythms– of social practices acquires meaning (Bakhtin, 1989; Nogués-Pedregal, 2014a).

Therefore, the notion of tourism space *as a mediator of meaning* and not as a geographical container of tourist activities seems to be a good heuristic tool for studying the social and cultural processes in settings in which tourism practices and activities are part of the landscape. The model's central idea lies in understanding that the industries of seduction awaken desireabilities in both potential tourists and the social groups that restructure their sense of past (collective memory), present (current management) and future (ideology of Development). With no need for further comment, the following graffiti (Illustration 1) condenses the mediation of tourism space since it ironically questions the redemptory message of the death of Jesus Christ as re-presented in the tourism context of Holy Week in Spain.

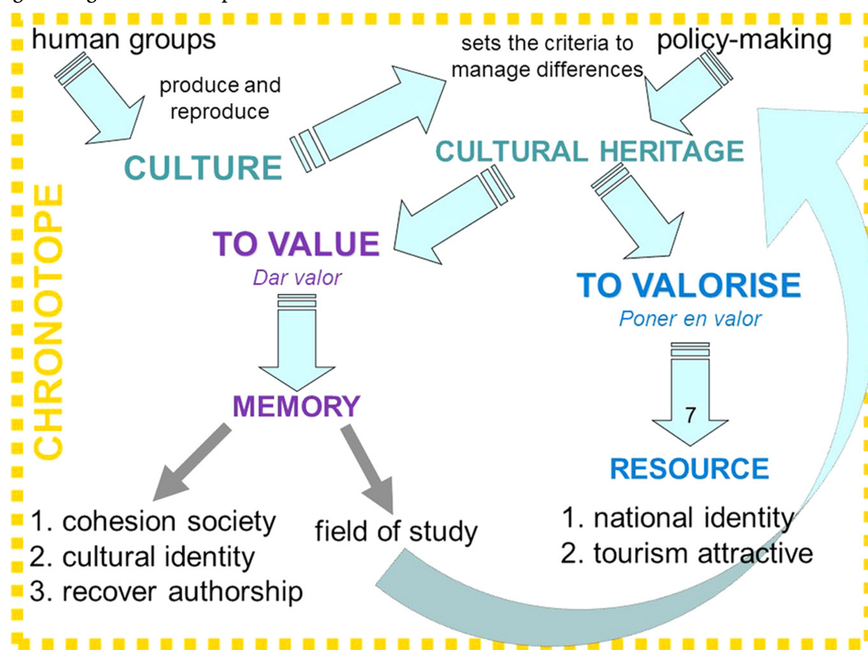
Detailed discussion has been devoted to the three main subjects upon which this theoretical model sheds some light (cf. Nogués-Pedregal, 2012), which are: a) heritagisation or patrimonialisation –or the process, by which certain elements are selected, invented, identified, named and managed; b) the production of tourism territories–or how tourism is presented to populations as a vehicle for development, and c) transnational mobilities and cosmopolitanism –or the modes in which the different social agents (socio-economic immigrants, residential tourists, diasporic visitors, tourists, cosmopolitan ethno-communities, local authorities, transnational elites, groups of interest to tourists) relate to one another, blur analytical categories and produce and reproduce their identities. Case studies in Greece, Spain, Morocco, Croatia, Lebanon, France and Crete, analyse themes such as globalization, cosmopolitanism, mobilities, power and late capitalism and detail the social and cultural dynamics in tourist destinations *in* the Mediterranean. These case studies discuss the diffuse boundaries existing between tourism and migration practices, the role played by tourism space in the dialogic construction of cultural identities, and the interconnection among local groups and non-local groups. Moreover, the anthropological narratives show how tourism shapes the social lives of the groups that live in tourism settings and how it mediates to offer a distinctive meaning to collective memories (cf. Nogués-Pedregal, 2012).

Fifth contribution: there is not only one way to foment the development of tourism

All of the foregoing points to yet another finding, which is that the mediating capacity of Tourism as a means for Development, is evident even before it has been materialised (projected) in a tourism territory (cf. Travé Molero, 2015). The documentary *Chambre d'hôtes dans le Sahel* by Christian Lallier (2001), presents an example. It is about a tiny village in northeastern Burkina Faso where locals are taught to provide accommodation and offer food, lead tours and make local crafts for prospective tourists. Accounts like these challenge the earlier acculturation approach (Nash & Smith, 1991) and seem to suggest that Bakhtin's dialogic perspective is the best strategy for understanding local modes of appropriation, resistance, refraction or resilience that arise in response to the hegemonic development engendered by tourism activities. They also point to the potential of alternative forms of development.

Anthropological studies show –from positions that analyse dialogue between stakeholders rather than dialectical opposition of contraries— that acculturation and the top-down approaches to regional development are becoming less and less applicable in efforts to understand the developments that tourist activities undergo in different parts of the planet. Tourism has been seen as a vehicle for development since the 1970s and today all bodies and institutions working in the field of development –such as the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)— engenders a direct causal relation among tourism activities, the resources valued as heritage and development (Moragues Cortada, 2006; Soler-García, Caballero-Segarra & Nogués-Pedregal, 2010). Since the eighties, detailed ethnographies on governance, appropriation practices, resistance, refraction or resilience, or the appearance of other ways to distribute the types of capital, or to use indigenous knowledge and to structure social space in new tourism contexts, revealed that the design and planning of tourism development neither can nor should be done without the involvements of the beneficiaries (Borges de Lima & King, 2017; Marín Guardado, 2015; Reid, 2003).

Anthropological knowledge of the tourism developments implemented by the Tizimín and Chicxulub of today shows that there are two large groups of strategies: a) those that 'valorise' the territory as a whole, *looking towards the outside*; and b) those that, *looking towards the inside*, seek 'to value' the resources already present in the territory. The following illustration summarizes the process of both strategies, using heritage as an example.



On the one hand, *dar valor* (to value) involves working for continuance in the production of meaning, for the historical density of societies, for their memory: "towards the inside". This consideration of memory gives cohesion to a society, and/or creates cultural identity, and/or recovers the value of authorship and its public recognition, especially in societies in which some social groups (normally indigenous peoples) are marginalized from the official history. To accomplish this, projects must pay attention to the meaning that the elements labelled 'cultural heritage' have for their authors. Attention and long-term fieldwork seem to be the only ways to handle this prickly issue with the necessary care. Alas, the use of memory as a field of scholarly research and the ensuing publications paradoxically link up with the other strategy. The strategy of *poner en valor* (to valorize) is intended primarily for efforts conceived "towards the outside" that is, with the aim of attracting tourists and meeting their expectations. This usage transforms "cultural heritage" into a "resource".

A number of different adjectives have appeared in recent decades to modify Tourism, such as ecological, agro, sustainable, community, solidarity, volunteer, pro-poor, ethical, etc. (Singh, 2015). Complementarily, these adjectives can become, as the model of the meaningful mediation of tourism space predicts, not only a managerial tool for outside stakeholders but also an aspirational objective for local stakeholders. This endless process of adjective-creations highlights the arrival of governance and management models that are trying to turn around the strategy of *valorising* the resources of the territory, which still prioritizes tourism planning

from the outside, looking *towards the outside* to satisfy the desireabilities of tourists, such as city branding. Among the social science researchers who study tourism development, some are exploring strategies that arise *on the inside*, that look *towards the inside* so as to empower local agents and prioritize their needs and wishes (Gascón & Ojeda, 2014) or address continuity concerns in the production of meaning (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). This indicates the appearance of a more engaged anthropology that understands Tourism better and can put forward alternative governance models with which to guide its development.

Conclusions

Can these five findings, contributions or key points help tourism studies move forward? In one way or another, the five insights on this list, which is neither complete nor exhaustive nor another state-of-the-art, shape a constellation in which new anthropological research can develop.

As a first conclusion, this paper shows that tourism is a fluid and complex set of phenomena that cannot be understood in one dimension or from one disciplinary perspective alone. In contrast with the reductionist approach that looks at Tourism univocally and uncritically as an economic activity, and predominantly from positivistic and functionalist paradigms, social science research has reached profound conceptualizations, identified essential historical components and put forward strong arguments based upon the documentation of cultural particulars and detailed descriptions of different social, economic, and political processes in tourism contexts. Here the term ‘positivistic’ is used in the sense suggested by George Steinmezt, i.e. to refer to those epistemological positions that are characterised by “regularity, determinism and system closure” (Steinmetz, 2005, pp. 34–35), and are decontextualized from their production.

Researchers should be aware that qualitative methodologies and thick descriptions of tourism processes –whether made from interpretivist, constructivist, postmodernist or critical theory standpoints— do not get along well with the rhythms imposed by academic reality. Actually, qualitative papers are becoming less and less frequent in publications on tourism studies because qualitative research is more time consuming, with longer periods of fieldwork and less likelihood of receiving financial support. The situation that scholars face is very well summarized by English speakers, so adept in acid humour and its nuances, with the phrase “*Publish or perish*”. This ideological framework, which since the work of Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie (1997) has been known as *academic capitalism*, also influences –if not determines– the publishing rhythm and hence, the themes and purposes of the research undertaken in the social and human sciences.

Considering this demanding academic milieu, it can be quite difficult to reconcile the legitimate desire to consolidate an academic career with the wish to conduct high quality, long-term, qualitative research. Academics should reflect on what the university milieu does to the production of social science knowledge. Indeed, adapting Greenwood's (1977) now-classic title *Culture by the pound*, it could be said that social science scholars should be cautioned not to sell “scientific knowledge by the ton”. The institutions that shape their development influence academic debates. In particular, when the academic debate has practical consequences such as the case of development policies, institutions are also loci for power struggles and consensus building as part of hegemonic strategies.

The second conclusion is that, since Redfield's first brief descriptive account of the cultural consequences of the arrival of visitors, tourism research in the social sciences has uncovered some solid ground upon which new clearly defined research topics can be examined. In the early stages, acculturation approaches were suitable to understand Tourism as an expansive and external set of practices within the frame of globalization and modernization. They might still be appropriate in relatively isolated and marginalized territories. However, the global extension of the phenomena and their historical continuity have prompted researchers to supplement the traditional acculturation perspective with more contextual approaches. In addition, the array of mobilities, including urban commuters and suburbanites, challenge social science's traditional analytical categories such as home, place or community (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). Consequently, social science researchers interested in tourism are now developing new theoretical and methodological tools to approach tourism as a context rather than as an external agent acting upon a territory and the local society.

A third conclusion is that anthropological research shows that there is not only one-way to develop tourism-related activities and businesses. The place's cultural-ecological rhythms, its labour structure and the social distances and networks that make up the local social space determine the economic context of tourism. Thanks to the hundreds of thick descriptions made in so many different territories by anthropologists, tourism is now understood as a fluid set of phenomena that cannot be frozen into functionalist approaches. Tourism stakeholders and scholars alike should therefore ponder the results of tourism social science so as to improve the economic sustainability of the tourism industry in socially complex territories such as, for instance, historical urban centres, which cannot be fully explained by the pattern of opposition between visitors and certain social groups in the local population.

All of this, however, also raises questions that suggest the need to strength certain areas of research. This may be particularly true in the sphere of tourism sustainability where, as research indicates, it is especially vital to reach a balance of entrepreneurial return, ecological preservation and also social and cultural diachronic coherence.

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Antonio-Miguel Nogués-Pedregal, Dept. of Social and Human Sciences, Universitas Miguel Hernández. Avda. de la Universidad, s/n, 03130 – Elche – Spain.

Since early nineties, I have focused on socio-anthropology of tourism especially on meanings production and the comprehension of culture and society in tourism contexts from a dialogical perspective. In the applied sphere, I have focused on cultural heritage management and tourism development, both in the realm of international cooperation (Latin America) and in regional development (Europe).