

MOBILITIES AND LIFESTYLE. NEW HORIZONS IN LAKE TOURISM

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Key Words: tourism, mobilities, lifestyle, slow travel.

A b s t r a c t

Tourism has expanded exponentially, as advances in transportation technology among others have led to enhanced personal mobility worldwide. In effect, the migratory phenomena of tourism and travel have become integral components of lifestyle migration for an ever increasing proportion of the world's population. In 2000, Urry introduced the concept of "mobilities", which is here conceptualised as including not only mobility (the migration of people) but also the movements of capital, information, skills, expertise and knowledge that arise from tourism and travel. In this paper, a preliminary schematic of lifestyle mobilities, including tourism, is presented and is illustrated in a discussion of the emerging area of slow tourism.

PRZEMIESZCZANIE SIĘ I STYL ŻYCIA. NOWE PERSPEKTYWY W TURYSTYCE JEZIOROWEJ

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Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, mobilności, styl życia, podróże typu slow.

A b s t r a k t

Turystyka rozwija się bardzo szybko dzięki m.in. postępowi w technologiach transportu umożliwiającemu zwiększoną mobilność ludzi na całym świecie. Zjawiska przemieszczania się ludzi uprawiających turystykę bądź podróżujących dla stale rosnącej części ludzkiej populacji stały się więc nieodłącznymi elementami stylu życia. URRY (2000) wprowadził termin mobilności, który w prezentowanej pracy obejmuje nie tylko przemieszczanie się (migrację ludzi), ale także przepływ kapitału, informacji, umiejętności, doświadczenia i wiedzy związanych są z turystyką i podróżowaniem. W pracy przedstawiono wstępny zarys mobilności związanych ze stylem życia, łącznie z uprawianiem turystyki oraz zobrazowano go rozważaniami na temat nowego nurtu, czyli turystyki w powolniejszym tempie, typu „slow”.

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Introduction

It is well recognized that advances in transportation and communication technologies, more flexible working arrangements, and increases in discretionary wealth and time have led to enhanced personal mobility world-wide. Although recognising that these benefits are not uniformly distributed among people or countries, a defining characteristic of the late-modern era has been their extension to a widening cross section of the world's population. While the majority of this mobility involves commuting, shopping and other daily circulation, a significant proportion is tourist movements involving journeys of longer duration between home and one or more destinations in search of leisure and amenity and with a view to enhancing lifestyle (MCINTYRE et al., 2006). As a migratory phenomenon, (WILLIAMS and HALL 2002), tourism can be seen as an important aspect of lifestyle migration for an increasingly wider proportion of the world's population (Figure 1). Lifestyle migration not only describes tourists (e.g., passing trade, second-home owners) but also encompass a significant proportion of people engaged in the tourist trade (e.g., entrepreneurs, peripatetic tourism workers), who make lifestyle choices characterised by an emphasis on balancing quality-of-life considerations including the natural environment, family time, freedom, a slower pace of life and community involvement with economic self-sufficiency

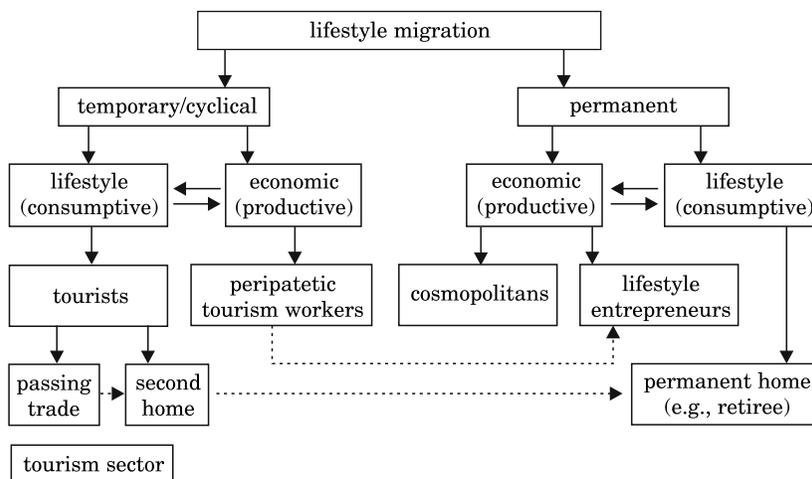


Fig. 1. Tourism and lifestyle migration

Source: McIntyre (2009).

Lifestyle Mobilities

In his book *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*, URRY (2000) introduced the term “mobilities” to extend the concept of mobility beyond the circulation of people to include the movements of “objects, images, information... and... (their) complex interdependencies... and social consequences” (p. 1). Thus, in the context of tourism, mobilities imply more than simply tourists travelling; they also include the movements of capital, information, skills, expertise and knowledge that arise from these movements.

MCINTYRE (2009) defined lifestyle mobilities as the movements of *people, capital, information and objects* associated with the process of voluntary relocation to places that are perceived as providing an enhanced or, at least, different lifestyle (p. 232).

Using this conceptualisation and the notion of *scapes* from APPADURAI (2008), a preliminary model of lifestyle mobilities was developed (MCINTYRE, in press). This schematic (Figure 2) encapsulates four scalar and fluid dimensions of late-modern global culture: *ethnoscapes* (e.g., tourists and other lifestyle

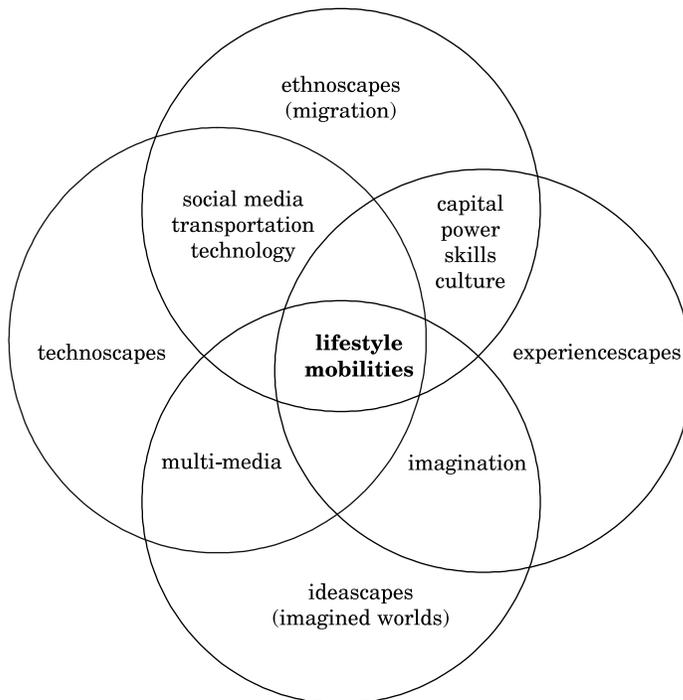


Fig. 2. A conceptual model of lifestyle mobilities (McIntyre in press)

migrants); *technoscapes* (e.g., social media and transportation technology); *experiencescapes* (the various experiential, personal and financial characteristics that potentially accompany the lifestyle migrants) and *ideascape*s (the imagined worlds of the lifestyle migrant) and the intersections between them.

The intersection between the *ethno* and *experience-scapes* represents the financial capital, skills, knowledge, power and influence of migrants. A not uncommon situation in tourist destinations throughout the developed world involves the impacts of capital flow on housing values resulting from second home purchase. The prevalence of this situation has caused the UK government to consider a ban on home purchase for seasonal use, as young people are being priced out of their home towns in such desirable areas as the Lake District in northern England (McCANDLESS 2005).

A new emphasis on mobilities has led to a re-assessment of tourism transportation (intersection of the *ethno* and *techno-scapes*) and its impacts on the global environment, the quality of travel experiences and the contribution of tourism to the lifestyles of residents and tourists.

Slow Mobilities

Today, tourism is based largely on a plentiful and relatively cheap supply of fossil fuels particularly oil. Over 90 percent of tourism transport uses oil, which accounts for between 75 and 90 percent of all carbon emissions resulting from tourism. Many tourism commentators (e.g., DICKINSON and LUMSDON 2010, HALL 2009) have argued that the “business as usual scenario” for tourism is no longer tenable. The world is approaching or has already passed “peak oil” and there is a growing consensus on the inevitability of negative impacts of anthropogenic climate change. On this basis, it is argued that the long term sustainability of tourism will hinge upon its ability to decouple from dependence on high-carbon forms of transport. In this context, attention is turning to consideration of “slow mobilities” (FULLAGER et al. 2012) or “slow travel” as an attractive alternative to tourism faced by increasing geopolitical and ethical constraints.

Sharing many similarities with the “slow food” and “slow cities” movements which emerged in Italy in the 1980’s and 1990’s, slow tourism is a reaction against the emphasis on speed and convenience of the “fast food” industry which is increasingly dominating service industries worldwide (RITZER 1993, NILSON et al. 2007). It is characterised by a number of themes which differentiate it from the majority of present-day tourism activity.

- a shift away from car and air travel;
- a behavioural shift to the rediscovery of travel for its own sake to facilitate slower, but more carbon-efficient, journeys;

- journeys that engender engagement with people encountered and places en-route, as well as the destination;
- an increasing expression of environmental concern by tourists conscious of the need to reduce their carbon footprint whilst maintaining the benefits of travel (DICKINSON and LUMSDON 2010: 176).

Examples of slow travel include: walking and cycle tourism, train tourism, bus and coach tourism, and water-based tourism (e.g., ferries, cruising, canoes, kayaks, yachts). This last is of particular interest in lake tourism (e.g., the Lake District in U.K., Mecklenburgischer Seen, Germany, Lake Superior, Canada). Also, walking and cycling routes are often focused on lakes, rivers and coastal areas which provide relatively flat and aesthetic terrain.

Slow travel harkens back to the early days of tourism to the Grand Tour and pilgrimages (HOWARD 2012), when the main modes of transport were walking or animal drawn vehicles. The advent of the bicycle provided an affordable form of transport which revolutionised mobility in the late 19th and early 20th century enabling people to travel from urban areas and explore the countryside (DICKINSON and LUMSDON 2010). Similarly, the increasing availability of the motor car later in the 20th century progressively extended leisure and travel opportunities to wider and wider sections of the community and ushered in a decline in cycle use both for commuting and more extended travel.

The dual emphasis on the journey and destination embodied in slow travel contrasts with the overriding destination orientation of most tourism today. A key aspect is the valuing of: slowness... embodied in the in the qualities of rhythm, pace, tempo and velocity that are produced in the sensory and affective relationship between the traveler and the world (CRESSWELL 2010: 19).

Arguably, it is these experiential aspects that attract most slow tourists (i.e., soft slow travelers) who see any environmental benefits as an added bonus only.

DICKINSON and LUMSDON (2010) argued that slow travel is potentially a sustainable alternative to current tourism practices, which result in “a degradation of the “public goods” (and)... a loss of diversity (and biodiversity)” (p. 181) and which are recognised by many as unsustainable. While acknowledging that the locked-in institutional processes characterising the tourism system will be extremely difficult to reverse, they point to policy and consumer attitudinal changes, which they argue may be the progenitors of a paradigmatic shift to an alternative, more ethical and environmentally responsible tourism. Additionally, they note that in all countries most tourism is short to medium distance and is principally domestic or cross-border and as such, slow alternatives (e.g., trains, coaches) for the vast majority of tourism may involve less change than we imagine.

On the other hand, FULLAGER et al. (2012) argue that it would be naive and simplistic to argue that slow travel is the answer given the enormous growth in middle-class consumerism and global travel already becoming evident in the newly booming economies of India and China. In addition, a majority of slow tourists use high-carbon modes of transport as a component of the holiday trip (e.g., travel by air or car to access slow travel destination). In effect, such practices nullify or reduce any carbon benefits arising from their choice of slow travel modalities. More generally, the freedom to move is a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, which has become a major stratifying factor of late modern times (BAUMANN 1998). Policies aimed at reducing travel will therefore not be viewed positively due to implications for people's lifestyles and social networks.

Whatever the ultimate fate of slow travel; universal panacea or niche market, an emerging industry is already evident variously emphasizing the avoidance of air and car travel, reducing individual environmental impact and extolling the richness of the travel experience (DICKINSON and LUMSDEN 2010). For example: taking time on the journey to engage with people and place... Slow travel is about enjoying the journey, as well as the destination. Moving away from budget flights and quick getaways to faraway places... moving towards overnight train journeys, lake cruises, ferries, cycle trips and home stays. Why not start a holiday from when you leave your front door, rather than when you enter your hotel room? (www.slowmovesblog.blogspot.com/) and with our philosophy of slow travel for women, the perceptive and sensitive traveler will be exposed to a "full immersion" of sensations, from the visual to the audio, to the tactile, the olfactive and the gustative. In this way the memories are deeply imbedded into our minds. (www.slow-travel-for-women.com).

Conclusions

In this short review, I have focused first on elaborating the concept of "mobilities" in the context of tourism and its links to the broader concept of lifestyle. As an example, I then explored the evolving concept of slow tourism and its potential in focusing tourism development beyond high-carbon transport dependency.

The mobilities concept provides a novel framework for understanding the impacts of tourism on people's lifestyle and critiquing current tourism practices. However, its potential contribution goes much beyond this, as FRANKLIN and KRANG (2001) suggest:

The excitement of mobilities in these highly mobile times, structured as they are by the language and practice of tourism, is that they generate new

social relations, new ways of living, new ties to space, new places, new forms of consumption and leisure and new aesthetic sensibilities (p. 12).

Accepted for print 7.02.2013

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