

3rd International Meeting of Young Researchers in Tourism

UNESCO Chair “Culture, Tourism, Development”

University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

FIELDWORK IN TOURISM RESEARCH

September 10th - 11th - 12th, 2015, Paris

Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris



CALL FOR PAPERS

Fieldwork practice, in terms of space (field) and method of data collection (fieldwork), represents a key element in the scientific approach employed in Human and Social Sciences. This approach enables in-depth analysis and comprehension of issues linked to a defined space, where the researcher seeks to address hypotheses established beforehand. Fieldwork is an important phase during which the researcher and the study object meet. Nonetheless, the notion of *fieldwork* places the field in a global approach that exceeds the possible separation that may appear between the theoretical construction and the empirical approach.

The polysemic nature of fieldwork provokes epistemological and methodological discussions within all thematic fields. Fieldwork remains a major task that each researcher undertakes but interprets differently according to his/her individual possibilities and goals, which are often adjusted according to unexpected issues and difficulties (La Soudière, 1988); it is in this sense that each researcher “goes to *his/her* field”. In this context of reopening epistemological discussions on fieldwork, the issues concerning its political dimension, its reflexivity and position, its rationality and corporality also have been put forth with the aim to encourage a more relational and processual research conception (Volvey, Calbérac, Houssay-Holzschuch, 2012).

In tourism research, the researcher collects data and information according to the permanent flow of people and the globalization of images. It is possible to imagine new fields and new surveys adapted to tourism, a complex and transnational phenomenon (Hall, 2010). In the context of an experience of “otherness”, the physical presence of the investigator in the field, who might be regarded him/herself as a tourist, becomes an aspect that deserves methodological reflection (Winkin, 1996).

For young researchers, fieldwork represents an important “*rite of passage*” (Lefort, 2012), whose appropriate progression is crucial, as it serves to construct and build up their scientific output. Fieldwork in the context of tourism research often leads to various questions, as researchers often face questions, sometimes doubts or apprehensions when approaching this key moment in their studies.

We chose “Fieldwork in Tourism Research” as the theme of this 3rd International Meeting of Young Researchers in Tourism (RIJCT) in order to offer a platform to discuss and reflect on these questions.

We hereby invite young as well as experienced researchers of all fields to participate in this meeting by sharing their own fieldwork experiences, and by contributing to responding to common questions that often arise in a research field that is as complex and transdisciplinary as tourism.

THEMATIC AREAS

The aim of this meeting is for young researchers to engage in discussions and reflect upon their own practices. Within this framework, several thematic areas are proposed:

AREA 1: CHOICE AND CONSTRUCTION OF FIELDWORK

The choice of field and fieldwork is a determinant task for any research project. *Tourism studies* show a specific link to the territory, which constitutes a research field. Tourism can be seen as staging or enhancing “the appeal” of a territory. Even though these tourist spaces aren’t necessarily part of daily living spaces, they can be experienced and lived (Stock, 2006) in multiple ways, by the researchers who study them.

This is where the question of choosing fieldwork arises. How do we choose it? Does the study object define the field or the opposite? Do we choose a known or an unknown field? Do we choose it based on a link with a subject, a problem, a country, a place or even an imaginary of our own? Can the choice of field be made by chance, out of passion, opportunity or funding possibilities (scholarship, private request)?

AREA 2: METHODOLOGY/ FIELDWORK PRACTICE:

Before starting field investigation, the young researcher prepares the best-adapted research tools and intervention systems in order to approach an object of study that is as multidisciplinary as tourism. The “glocal” ethnography (Salazar, 2010) is a successful methodology applied in tourism research, as is the comparison of several fields that allow the analysis of global phenomena rooted in local societies.

Is it possible to choose the methodology according to the expected difficulties and available resources of the young researcher? How to take note of one’s temporality and culture? When do you go in the field, for how long, should you repeat and go in the field several times? How do you identify and approach the survey respondents? How do you obtain the most reliable information? Which method for which field?

AREA 3: POSITIONNALITY OF THE RESEARCHER

The expression “*my field*”, used by the researcher as if it were “his/her own”, raises the question of the identity links existing between both the researcher and the field, built through the spatial dimension of practice. The researcher must ensure to maintain his/her investigator position in the field, and the distance (cultural, professional, geographical) that separates him/her from it. He/She must also transpose the knowledge, that has been co-created with the people in the field (tourists, inhabitants, actors, etc.), into a discourse. He/She will then evaluate the impact of this discourse within the tourist territory (Hall, 2010).

To which point can the young researcher negotiate his/her status and identity when conducting a survey in tourism research (“act as a tourist”, “act as a local”)? Is the researcher also actor and co-producer of his/her fieldwork? To which extent, does he/she analyse his/her field based on a point of view and presuppositions? How can he/she be objective with respect to his/her experience, and question his/her posture at the same time, in order to integrate it within a rigorous scientific framework?

AREA 4: DIGITAL FIELDWORK

In tourism research, digital technology has revolutionized the ways of investigation and has created new fields to explore. A young researcher needs to develop new skills in order to build a “digital fieldwork” (netography) and to decode the data that sometimes escapes the physical field. Thus, social networks for example, show the density of the immediate circulation of tourist imaginaries, and Internet allows tourists to individually configure their experience. However, the large data available online must be used carefully, and their scientific reliability must be ensured.

In tourism research, can fieldwork be done without physically going to the field? How do you scientifically validate “digital fieldwork”? How do you articulate physical fieldwork and digital fieldwork? Which digital methods for which physical fieldwork? Can the real/virtual confrontation enhance research work? Has digital technology become indispensable for young researchers?

AREA 5: TOURISM AND FIELDWORK, WHICH ISSUES AND LIMITS?

Once on the field, the researcher may notice the limits of theoretical methods, and realize that fieldwork is a solitary task (Claval, 2013). In fact, the researcher ends up using the knowledge received at university, and proposes a methodology based on his/her personal *know-how*. In this sense, the young researcher must be able to define himself /herself and the limits of his/her fieldwork.

Which constraints appear for a young researcher in the framework of a tourism survey (language or cultural barriers, access to the field, access to tourists, etc.)? Similarly, which specific obstacles does he/she encounter during surveys

on a sensitive, dangerous or uncomfortable field (linked to a war past, conflict area, sexual tourism, ethical questions, etc.)? Moreover, how to react to unexpected events during fieldwork? How does one adapt if he/she has to change fields during his/her research project? How can one adapt to another field?

Finally, how can one set the « limit » of his/her fieldwork in order not to fall into the systematic approach of «always going further »? How/when is the fieldwork task completed by a young researcher, and how does he/she prepare the post-fieldwork phase?

PROPOSALS, PARTICIPATION

In order to offer a rich and diversified program, we propose several possibilities of participation:

- **Oral presentation:**

To submit an oral presentation, send a summary (300 to 500 words) presenting the topic, the main objectives and the methods used. (Presentation of 15 min with additional time planned for questions and discussion)

- **Scientific poster:**

To submit a scientific poster, send a summary (200 words) containing a title and the main objective. The poster size required will be A0 (0.80 X 1.20m) and will be at the expenses of the participants.

The role of images produced by young researchers in Tourism during their field investigations:

In tourism studies, many young researchers take pictures on the field. What kind of pictures does a young researcher take on his field? When and why does he/she take them? What does a young researcher seek to show through the pictures taken on his/her field? How can we represent, through a picture, a tourist phenomenon, given the ephemeral character of the tourist/visitor presence, and the constant fluctuations in the field? Do we take comparative photos of the same object or place?

As the researcher makes a choice when taking a picture, he/she therefore determines the representation he/she will give of his/her field. To what extent is the field and the tourist phenomenon/reality altered through the pictures taken and selected by a young researcher in order to illustrate his/her research? What use is made of the photographs in the research work, and what is their scientific value?

In order to explore this issue in greater depth, we invite young researchers to establish a commented photographic corpus, illustrating the pictures taken during their fieldwork. The same questions arise concerning video recordings during fieldwork.

- **Photography exhibition:**

To submit a photographic corpus, please send a presentation of your project (200 words) with a title in French and in English. The number of photographs and their presentation format is free of choice. However, the format cannot exceed an A0 format (0.80 X 1.20m). Pictures will be at the expenses of the participants and will have to be ready to be hung up for the exhibition.

- **Audiovisual screening:**

To submit an audiovisual, please send a presentation of your project (200 words), describing the content of the video. Please also indicate the total length of the video, its context and date of production and name of the author(s).

The available screening material includes a computer (PC or Mac), a projector and a white screen.

SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Submissions are to be sent no later than **Monday 16 March 2015**, to **the congress email address:** rijct2015@gmail.com

All submissions should include:

-Name and SURNAME, name of university and laboratory, and a valid contact email

-The type of proposition (audiovisual screening, photography exhibition, oral presentation, scientific poster), the chosen thematic area, the title of the proposition; the abstract and key words (3 to 5) related to the proposition should be sent in the form of a Word document in 12-point Arial font, with 1.5 line spacing, in the language chosen for communication (French or English).

Accepted abstracts will be gathered in a document (paper and digital), which will be made available to all congress participants.

Further information and indications will be given after the selection process.

ORGANISATION

CALENDER

Final deadline for submission of proposals: Monday, March 16th, 2015

Answers given to the participants: April 2015

Mandatory deadline for submission of accepted proposals: July 15th, 2015

-Summary of oral presentation text (5000 characters)

-Posters (Send a PDF of the poster in size A0 (0.80 X 1.20m))

-Photographs (Send digital material)

-Audiovisuals (Send digital material)

(These documents must be sent via email to: rjct2015@gmail.com)

LANGUAGES OF THE CONGRESS

The participants of the meeting are free to present in either French or English. The Power Point presentation is required in the same language as the oral presentation. There will be no simultaneous translation.

VALORIZATION OF THE MEETING

The proceedings of the RIJCT will be published as digital material.

A small number of the papers selected will be published in a peer-reviewed journal specialized in tourism.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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