Tourist pic

Beyond crisis: a glance at a re-thinking of alpine tourism

Philippe Bourdeau & Libéra Berthelot
Degrowth, objection to growth...
What about Tourism?

à Degrowth as a ‘semantic bomb’

à 2 key-words “happiness” and “growth”
   = a question to the relationship between
   Culture and Economy

à A traditional debate and misunderstanding
   about the status of tourism

Culture (Experience) ? Economy (consumption)
Avant les antidépresseurs,
IL Y AVAIT LES MONTAGNES

Là où je vais,
il n'y a pas de foule,

pas de voitures
et pas d'administrations...

1999

1999

1999
Conference on tourism in U.E.
« Tourism, driving force of growth for future »
Berlin, Germany, 2007
Alpine tourism: from lost paradise to a new utopia?

1. Objection to growth: the possibility of *de-thinking* Tourism

2. Recreation / Re-creation : *Re-thinking* Tourism?

3. Questions for a new *know-how*

4. Discussion
1. Degrowth: the possibility of *dethinking* tourism

à A *radical* point of view
Tourism as the flagship of a work-based society
Tourism at the core of the misuse of mobility
Tourism as a common and branding process for places à Junkspaces?
Tourism as the showcase of North-South asymmetry

From exoticism to neo-colonialism
Tourism as a laboratory for neo-liberalization
Tourism facing growing criticism
Tourist go home
Attacks on the essence of tourism

* « Club Med(ical) to treat a life empty of sense »
Tourism as an icon of a both threatening (for the planet) and threatened way of life

Game over?
Consensus on the benefits of tourism and its political or values neutrality

Rise of radical criticism (tourist-phobia?) and environmental or social disputes at all scales

The end of the modern tourist utopia and uchronia?
Even sustainable Tourism can be seen as an hypocrisy
Let’s break ski resorts

[Departure rate to winter sports in France: 7,4 %]

2004
2. Recreation / Re-creation?

*Re-thinking Tourism?*
The pressure of crisis in Alpine tourism

à loss of market share of alpine countries

Index: 1990=100


Italy
Spain
France
Switzerland
Austria

P. Keller / WTO
Climate change?

à an indicator for structural contradictions and weaknesses of alpine tourism (*an ending model, reduced to a niche market*)
Uncertainty and a feeling of crisis are rising

* "Mountain no longer inspire dreams"
... But new frontiers of Alpine tourism are (of course) already at work...
New relationships between « here » and « elsewhere »

à A future already here?!
Staycation: a way out from obviousness

« Don’t go anymore in holidays »

« The newspaper for those who decided to stay »

« My holidays at home »

[Links with amenity migrations]
Feeling good without going far: rediscovering nearness

se sentir bien sans aller loin
Urban and peri-urban leisure activities

à new leisure experiences in common places
A game with images and geographic references

Madagascar?

Caraïbes?*

*Caribbean?
Switzerland or New-York?!

* Explore smallest metropolis in the world
3. Questions for the setting of a new know-how
How to manage the revival of multi-seasonal tourism?

1932
How to understand and promote the revival of *Outsiders* (very small resorts, peripherical mountains...)

à « *small is beautiful* » ?
How to manage the post-resort phenomenon »
(unity of place, time & action)

à What is happening beside and between the resorts?
How to integrate counter-cultural creativity?

à *underground* and *experimental tourism*...

à Beyond transgressions a renewal in the use, sense and rules of place, time (night practises), amenities, technologies (*geocatching*), body (in respect with nature)
How to use social networks and the tourists skills?
How to create and *let create* Situations?

3 levels in tourist experience:

1. Décor (planning, equipment)
2. Show (entertainment, event)
3. « Situation »: psycho-geographic experience

Renewal of Alpine Tourism is no more a matter of technology or marketing... But more than ever a matter of culture (experiences, atmosphere, game, education...)

- Mountain as a *“Dream factory”* (WTO, 2004)?
- Never forgetting that Tourists made Tourism!
  - « *Free time = free space* » (E. Bloch) ??
**Creation-destruction: a forgotten question?**

To apply to tourist destinations and activities at all scales

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<th>Creation</th>
<th>Destruction</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation</strong></td>
<td>« I create what is creating me »</td>
<td>« I create what is destroying me »</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Destruction</strong></td>
<td>« I destroy what is creating me »</td>
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O. Soubeyran - IGA
4. Discussion about stakes and questions
Growth objection applied to Tourism: a counter-utopia?

à Radical questions to the obviousness of Tourism: mobility, exoticism, relationship between work and leisure, here and faraway...

à Inversion of the main codes of Tourism: nearness, everyday life, low consumption, slow mobility, immersion in time, reduction of technological mediation...

Transitions and revolutions to take into account
In the Alps: towards post-tourism?

« Way out from all-ski »

« Way out from all-snow »

« Way out from all-tourism »

TOURISM — — — — — — — POST-TOURISM
Adaptation to climate change Towards a new seasonal reversal?

1860
- Summer Mountain
- Winter Sea
- Spring/autumn Piedmont lakes

1960
- Summer Sea
- Winter Mountain
- Ski, naturism, heliotropism...

2060?
- Summer Mountain
- Winter Sea
- Climate change
Growth objection applied to Tourism:
So many (new or old) questions!

• Which relationships between Tourism as a cultural experience and as an economic phenomenon?
  Culture à Economy (and not inverse!)

• How to manage transitions, links, betweenness…?
  à resorts/villages, corporate/community, commercial/non-commercial...

• How to succeed re-localization of Tourism without withdrawn attitude?
  à Opening of mind, liberation, discovery...

• How to connect places and visitors?
Mountain to the fourth scenario

« 4 seasons »...

« 4 spaces » : ski resorts-villages-protected areas-cities

« 4 economies » : productive-public-résidential-social

« 4 activities » : agriculture-craftsmanship & services-recreation-ICT
Thank you
for your attention