tourism & gender
embodiment, sensuality and experience

Edited by
A. Pritchard, N. Morgan, I. Ateljevic, C. Harris

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TOURISM AND GENDER
Embodiment, Sensuality and Experience
This book is dedicated to
James Mahony (1938–2006)
Elsie Davies and Grace Morgan
Tina Ateljevic
Sue Harris
TOURISM AND GENDER
Embodiment, Sensuality and Experience

Edited by

Annette Pritchard
The Welsh Centre for Tourism Research
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, UK

Nigel Morgan
The Welsh Centre for Tourism Research
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, UK

Irena Ateljevic
Wageningen University
Wageningen, The Netherlands

and

Candice Harris
Auckland University of Technology
Auckland, New Zealand
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Contributors

**Martine Abramovici** is a PhD candidate in tourism in the Faculty of Business at Auckland University of Technology. Martine’s PhD focuses on Italian women and tanning, revealing the body to be a focal point in understanding Italian contemporary society. Her research interests include postmodern consumer society and identity, sociocultural issues, gender issues, the body and embodiment and critical approaches to research.

**Irena Ateljevic** received her doctoral degree in human geography in 1998 at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She is currently positioned within the Socio-Spatial Analysis Group at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, and is interested in the cultural complexities of gender, class, age and ethnicity in the production and consumption of tourist spaces and experiences, and how their intersection reproduces power relations of injustice and inequality.

**Fabrice Desmarais** is a Lecturer in the Department of Management Communication at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. His main area of interest is advertising, in particular how it connects with culture and other areas of study such as sports and tourism.

**Sermin Elmas** received her Master’s and doctoral degrees in Sociology from the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. She started to work as a full-time instructor in the School of Applied Technology and Management, Bilkent University, Ankara, in 1991. She teaches tourism sociology, organizational behaviour, social psychology and ethics in the hospitality industry, and has published on tourism sociology and women’s studies.

**Nashwa Samir El-Sherif Ibrahim** lectures in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels in Helwan University in Egypt. She studied for her PhD in the Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Her research interests include gender, human rights and human resources issues in tourism management.
Simone Fullagar is an interdisciplinary sociologist with a post-structuralist interest in questions about leisure, tourism and well-being. She has published widely on narratives of travel and leisure, youth suicide prevention and women’s recovery from depression. She is a Senior Lecturer within the Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, in conjunction with the Centre for Work, Leisure and Community Research, Griffith University, Australia.

Huimin Gu is Professor and Deputy Dean of the School of Tourism Management at Beijing International Studies University and an Honoured Professor of the Beijing Tourism Bureau. She has studied in Australia and was a Visiting Scholar at the Hilton Conrad College, University of Houston, while she obtained her doctoral degree from the Renmin University of China Business School. In addition to translations, she has published five books including Traces of Home: The Development of Dragon Hotel (with Chen Guorao, 2002) and Tourism Marketing (2002). She is currently working with Chris Ryan on a Chinese version of Researching Tourist Satisfaction, initially published by Routledge in 1995.

Derek Hall is a partner of Seabank Associates and a Visiting Professor at HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland. He lives in Scotland and has long-standing research and publication interests in tourism and gender issues, tourism and regional development in socialist and post-socialist societies, and in transport policy.

Kevin Hannam is Professor and Head of Tourism at the University of Sunderland, UK. He has published widely on a range of tourism matters and is currently editing a book on backpacker tourism. He is the co-editor of the journal Mobilities.

Candice Harris is a Senior Lecturer in Management in the Faculty of Business at Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Her PhD obtained from Victoria University focused on New Zealand women as business travellers. Her research interests include gender and diversity issues in tourism and management, human resource management, and qualitative and critical approaches to research.

Eleri Jones was Head of the Welsh School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Management, which is now part of Cardiff School of Management at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Her research interests focus on issues relating to sustainability and destination development with a focus on human resourcing issues, especially management and leadership issues. She leads a portfolio of European and other projects and is involved in the supervision of a number of international MPhil and PhD research degree candidates.

Fiona Jordan is with the School of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK. Her research centres on the ways in which leisure and holiday spaces and places are represented and consumed. Her doctoral study focused on the experiences of women travelling alone and this, together with explorations of the representation of tourism in popular cultural forms such as women’s and men’s lifestyle magazines, has formed the basis of her recent publications.

Dan Knox is a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at the University of Sunderland, UK. He has research interests in critical tourism theory, embodiment and practice, popular cultures, everyday lives and the relations between national heritage and identity.
Nigel Morgan is a Professor of Tourism Studies at the Cardiff School of Management’s Welsh Centre for Tourism Research at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. He has published widely on the sociocultural dimensions of tourism and destination marketing, including several books and numerous research papers and book chapters.

Chaim Noy is an independent scholar, presently teaching at the Departments of Communication, Sociology and Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His recent publications include *A Narrative Community: Voices of Israeli Backpackers* (Wayne State University Press, 2007) and *Israeli Backpackers: From Tourism to a Rite of Passage* (SUNY Press, 2005; co-edited with Erik Cohen).

Yaniv Poria is located in the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Be’er sheva, Israel. His main research interest is the management of heritage in tourism and he also writes on gay and lesbian tourist experiences.

Annette Pritchard is a Reader and Director of the Cardiff School of Management’s Welsh Centre for Tourism Research at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. She has published eight books and numerous research papers on the relationships between tourism, representation and social structures, experiences and identities.

Greg Ringer is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management in the University of Oregon. Greg lectures on international tourism planning and women’s studies at the University of Oregon, and serves as Visiting Professor at universities in Africa, Eurasia, Latin and North America, and the Pacific. He is also principal consultant for DrGreg & Friends, a non-profit tourism cooperative which promotes sustainable community development and gender equality through travel.

Chris Ryan is a Professor of Tourism at The University of Waikato Management School, Hamilton, New Zealand. He is the editor of the journal *Tourism Management*, and a Fellow of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism. His books include *The Tourism Experience* (Continuum, 2002) and *Recreational Tourism: Demand and Impacts* (Channel View, 2003). He gained a doctoral degree at the Aston University Business School, UK. He has published over 80 refereed journal articles and undertaken various reports for governmental bodies.

Diane Sedgley is a Senior Lecturer in the Cardiff School of Management’s Welsh Centre for Tourism Research at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Her research interests focus on the experiences of minority groups in tourism and leisure. She has published on lesbian and gay tourism and leisure, and is currently involved in research which seeks to understand older women’s leisure and tourism experiences.

Jennie Small is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her specific research interest is tourist behaviour in terms of gender, age, disability (mobility and vision impairment) and embodiment. More generally, she is interested in a Critical Tourism approach to tourist behaviour.

Anu Valtonen works as Marketing Professor at the Faculty of Business and Tourism at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. Her major research
interests relate to consumer studies, consumer culture, leisure studies and culture theories and methodologies. She is a researcher at the *Tourism as Work* project.

**Jeanne van Eeden** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Visual Arts, University of Pretoria, South Africa. She is particularly interested in the role of the entertainment and leisure economy in postcolonial South African visual culture and is the co-editor of the book *South African Visual Culture* (Van Schaik, 2005).

**Soile Veijola** is a sociologist and works at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland, as Professor of cultural studies of tourism. Her earlier publications include feminist critiques of theorizing on tourism (mostly co-authored with Eeva Jokinen) and analyses of mixed social orders in sports and society. She is currently leading an interdisciplinary research project entitled *Tourism as Work*.

**Erica Wilson** is a Lecturer in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Southern Cross University in Lismore, Northern New South Wales. Her PhD from Griffith University focused on the solo travel experiences of Australian women, particularly the constraints they face and how these are negotiated. Her research interests lie with gender and tourism, the tourist experience, leisure constraints and negotiation, and qualitative research methodologies.
Foreword

The editors of this volume, Annette Pritchard, Nigel Morgan, Irena Ateljevic and Candice Harris are on the forefront of a re-energized focus on gender emanating from the critical turn now shaking up tourism’s various academies. This collection of essays presents a dynamic project for Tourism Studies, continuing a challenge to us all to think within and outside of our own bodies, be they corporal and/or institutional, about the critical importance of gender equity in our daily world. As these essays demonstrate, gender does indeed matter. For the past decade or so, global feminist scholarship has encouraged us to approach our work in terms of ‘intersectionality’. This most cumbersome of words has at its core a reminder that we are complex beings of many identities, limitations, resources, influences, positions and perceptions, studying equally complex situations located in multiple truths. The parsing of these truths as we build knowledge in Tourism Studies takes us back time and again to the diverse facts that shape our ontologies and methods of research, as well as our motivations to challenge the injustices we find along the way.

Being an old ‘second waver’ feminist myself who has believed in the primacy of gender relative to many other loci of inequalities including race, class, ethnicity, age, nationality, sexuality, ability, etc., the challenge of the ‘third wave’ to think only through intersections of these categories has caught me out in epistemological crisis, holding on to my ideas about patriarchy. Postmodernism’s denial of structural inequalities adds another layer of questions we should address. A good map for negotiating these topographies can be found in reflexive embodiment theory, as we see in both the Editors’ Introduction and many of the ensuing chapters. The volume’s authors represent a range of nationalities from academies more or less like the ones in the UK and the USA discussed in the Introduction. Their locations are yet another difference we should be sensitive to while we build a truly cosmopolitan scholarship. As the next generation of tourism scholars moves into the Critical Studies arena of feminist analysis we are beginning to see their full-scale ethnographies and complex research projects. What are the concrete or glass ceilings and walls that they will encounter in their scholarship and how will they challenge them? This book leads the way.

Margaret Byrne Swain
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Annette Pritchard
Cardiff, Wales

Nigel Morgan
Cardiff, Wales

Irena Ateljevic
Wageningen, The Netherlands

Candice Harris
Auckland, New Zealand

20 December 2006
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Introduction

Why do issues of gender, sexuality and embodiment matter in tourism? Before addressing this question and turning our attention to the implications of gender and embodiment for the tourism industry and its stakeholders, we first need to consider today’s gendered world and our own gendered academic collectives so that we may better understand the power dynamics and discourses which shape tourism theory and practice. For some contemporary commentators, academic and activist discussions about gender are ‘so last century’, a debate out of place in today’s post-modern world where relativity, fluidity and imagination have replaced universality, fixidity and objectivity, where identities are conceived as performances – mutable, represented, relative and constructed. In such a world the structural inequalities suggested by ‘gender’ carry little weight, and concerns about the existence and consequences of social differences based on genders are seen to be ‘politically old fashioned (as well as clearly detrimental to one’s career, both inside and outside academia)’ (Oakley, 2006, p. 19). Neither is gender ‘sexy’ for the woman on the street, and feminism is now so stereotyped and questioned (Chesler, 1997) that almost three-quarters of British women say that they are not feminists (available at: www.womankind.org.uk). It seems as though before we have really begun to unpick the complexities and implications of gender (and certainly before many research fields – including tourism – have engaged with the nuances of masculinities), Western societies have already become bored by issues of femininities, masculinities and genders. Yet, quite clearly, whatever our social or geographic location, whilst our experiences of (dis)empowerment and (in)equalities may vary, none of us live in equal societies and it is a worrying reality that not one country has yet managed to eliminate the gender gap (World Economic Forum, 2005).

In fact, some 40 years after the emergence of the western feminist movement, women everywhere remain severely disadvantaged compared to men across all social criteria and classifications. The statistics are truly shocking: the leading cause