

Tourism and Leisure PhD Program

Research seminars 2019



Rovira i Virgili University, Catalonia

Vila-seca Campus, Faculty of Tourism and Geography

Friday 11 January 2019, h. 10.00 – 14.00

Prof. Claudio Minca & Dr. Maartje Roelofsen, *Macquarie University (Sydney – Australia)*

“Airbnb: the end or the future of cultural tourism?”

This presentation will reflect on the cultural geographies of Airbnb and their potential implications for the future of tourism in many cities. Starting from a few considerations on the changing meaning of ‘going local’ in tourism, we will suggest that Airbnb has taken the penetration of places to an entirely different level. The putatively ‘horizontal’ structure of the colonial gaze that has for long informed the practices of cultural tourism, especially in relation to remote and traditional communities, we are now faced with the promise – on the part of Airbnb and similar platforms – of deeper and somewhat ‘vertical’ experiences of other cultures and their places. We will thus ask whether Airbnb’s incorporation of the most intimate spaces of the home and of the residents’ everyday life may represent the ‘end of cultural tourism’ or, rather, the anticipation of its disturbing future developments. Using empirical evidence from Bulgaria and the Netherlands, we will thus conclude by provocatively interrogating how such qualitative penetration of the spaces of the ‘local’ promised by Airbnb is matched by the calculative rationalities of the platform’s ratings and rankings: that is, by a set of new social relationships produced and regulated by a powerful algorithm. The keynote will be followed by two brief presentations where the speakers will discuss some of the most intriguing methodological implications of their (field)work on tourism.

Claudio’s and Martije’s keynote will be followed by a round table discussion with Sergio Nasarre Aznar, Director of the URV’s Chair of Housing and professor of Civil law at our university, and Anal Quaglieri Domínguez, PhD candidate in Tourism & Leisure at URV and one of the leading European authors on gentrification dynamics in tourist cities.

This lecture and the round table debate will be moderated by Prof. Antonio Paolo Russo. Please confirm participation to antonio.russo@urv.cat.



Claudio Minca is Professor and Head of the Department of Geography and Planning at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. His main research projects have focused on the geographies of tourism and travel and on the spatial theories of modernity, including conceptualizations of landscape, place and power. He has also written extensively on the relationship between space and biopolitics, with a particular focus on the work of philosopher Giorgio Agamben and legal theorist Carl Schmitt. Recently he has been working on camp geographies, with a particular focus on the archipelago of refugee camps in the Balkan region. His most recent books are *On Schmitt and Space* (2015, with R. Rowan), *Hitler’s Geographies* (2016, with P. Giaccaria), *Moroccan Dreams* (2016, with L. Wagner), *After Heritage* (2018, with H. Muzaini) and *Camps Revisited* (2018, with I. Katz and D. Martin).

Maartje Roelofsen is an Associate Lecturer at the Department of Geography and Planning at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Maartje recently completed her doctoral degree in Human Geography at the University of Graz in Austria, where she has examined the role of digital technologies in shaping and making (tourism) spaces. With an empirical focus on the Airbnb platform, her work has provided a critical understanding of the ideas of “home”, “hospitality” and “life” in relation to the global sharing economies of tourism. Maartje’s current research focuses on the tourist worker’s body in the platform economy, and algorithmic place-making in tourism.



With the collaboration of