Welcome to the seminar

TOUR GUIDING AND SUSTAINABILITY: FILLING THE GAPS

Dates: 7th December 2017 9am-3pm
8th December 2017 10:00am-1pm
Location: Room B51 (Aulan)

Uppsala University, Campus Gotland
Visby, Sweden
The increase in tourism poses important questions of sustainability for destinations worldwide. On the island of Gotland in particular, a well-known tourist destination in Southern Sweden, issues related to environmental, cultural, social, and economic sustainability are bound to rise and, potentially, to grow with the launch of the new cruise quay in April 2018. To efficiently tackle them, Uppsala University Campus Gotland started a new, long-term interdisciplinary program called *Hållbara Besök* (Sustainable Visits) in 2016. The program’s purpose is to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for the tourism industry by productively connecting researchers at Uppsala University with local stakeholders and businesses. The proposed workshop on sustainability and tour guides is part of this program.

In the past decades, sustainable tourism development has become the driving ideology for the tourism industry worldwide. Tour guides are an integral part of this process. In their multiple and complex roles as providers, intermediaries, and cultural brokers between guests, hosts, and destinations, tour guides have the potential to play a crucial role in contributing to the development and promotion of all aspects of sustainable tourism through their narratives and behaviors, as recent research has shown (Weiler and Ham 2002 and 2010; Jensen 2010; Pereira and Mykletun 2012; Henning 2008).

During this two-day seminar, researchers from Scandinavian and continental institutions of higher educations, tour guides, and other stakeholders will come together and have the opportunity to 1) discuss current issues on sustainability and tour guiding and 2) to develop innovative and sustainable ideas and practices for tour guiding for the tourism industry across the Baltic Region and in Europe.

For further information, please contact:

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THE WORKSHOP IS FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

LANGUAGES: ENGLISH AND SWEDISH
PROGRAM

Day 1 – 7th December 2017

9:00-9:15 Welcome by Olle Jansson (Advisor to the Vice Chancellor, Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden), Owe Ronström (Professor, Dept. of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden), and Consuelo Griggio (researcher, Dept. of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden).

9:15-9:45 Jane Widtfeldt Meged (Associate Professor, Tourist Guide Diploma Programme Department of People and Technology Roskilde University, Denmark)
Tour guides – from casual laborers to lifestyle entrepreneurs and innovators
Tour guides have always lead a precarious working life in a highly competitive labor market, and as a consequence they have become ardent job crafters actively shaping their job identity, relations and tasks, thus ultimately shaping the tourism industry. Drawing on my research on guides working life, free guided tours in the sharing economy and network innovation I want to explore and discuss not only how guides may create a sustainable working life but also their possible roles as lifestyle entrepreneurs and innovators e.g. on sustainable tourism.

9:45-10:15 Reidar Myklestun (Professor Emeritus, Norwegian School of Hotel Management Faculty of Social Sciences Stavanger University, Norway)
Towards increased polarisation of tourist guiding as a profession and job
Tourist guiding is still developing and expanding as a phenomenon and as job and business opportunities. The processes are driven by globalization in general, increase in tourist traffic from new areas, search for new and often extreme adventures, and the growth of the cruise industry. The effects vary with type of destination, but add up to a broadening, and in some cases a specialisation of the guiding as a job or profession. New experiencescapes are opened up for guided tours; new approaches to guiding are observed; Experience and transformation has become the main “outcome” sought by tourists, new tourists from cultures unfamiliar to us arrive in increasing numbers; the societies are changing; history is slightly re-written and heritage re-interpreted; and sustainability is usually part of the discourse. Processes like the above creates opportunities and hazels. Opportunities include entrepreneurship and diversification of guide services, room for innovation and creativity, commodification of experiencescapes, and increasing job options. Guides in adventure experiencescapes report on commodification of their offers to host a broader range of inexperienced travellers and the consequent challenges. Guides in traditional urban guiding jobs thrive and enjoys
their work, and some of them work up to high ages if they can control the flow of their work. On the negative side, new companies may sharpen the competition about guide services as they pay lower rates to seasonal workers with no previous guide training, mainly from southern and eastern Europe and offer them lousy working conditions. In particular, operators within the cruise sector buy guiding services from these companies. For the moment being, the communication between the destination authorities and the operators buying the low quality guide services must be improved if the problem should be reduced.

10:15-10:45 Coffee Break

10:45-11:15 Inga Køfoed Andersen (Tour Leader at Ans Rejser and Innoguide Aarhus, Denmark)
Sustainable tourism – a change of perspective and mindset
The aim of this presentation is to give inspiration and practical instruction on how the guide can play a unique and important role in implementing sustainable tourism. The concept of sustainability as it relates to tourism is “development that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems.” Therefore, tourism can contribute to an area’s economic and socio-cultural arenas while respecting, promoting, and caring for the environment. At my presentation I will speak of my personal experience with package tours and sustainability. The presentation is also an introduction to the mindset of a guide using the definition given by INNOGUIDE.

11:15-12:00 Discussion

12:00-13:00 Lunch Break on your own

13:00-13:30
Owe Ronström (Professor, Dept. of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden)
Interface, exformation and Hermes' dilemma: Ethnological perspectives on tour guides
Tour guides are by necessity and profession messengers, intermediates, go-betweeners. In this presentation I will look at three aspects of this position from a theoretical and philosophical perspective. After introducing some basic aspects of interface theory, I will dwell on the notion of 'exformation', as a result of active and culturally meaningful neglect. To end, I will reflect on tour guides in the light of "Hermes' dilemma" (Crapanzano 1992), which concerns the epistemology of interpretation, mediation, representation, and which thus may throw light on the position, role and activities of tour guides.

13:30-14:00
Dineke Koerts (Senior Lecturer and Researcher, NHTV Breda University of Applied
Chinese independent tourists: new opportunities for independent European guides?

Europe is on the wish list of many Chinese tourists and it is estimated that Europe will welcome over 11 million Chinese tourists in 2017. Presently not even 10 percent of China’s outbound tourists make it to Europe but the number of Chinese visitors here will continue to grow by some 9.3 percent a year over the next five years according to UNWTO.

The majority of Chinese outbound tourists still choose package tours to visit long-haul destinations such as Europe. Such tours usually take travellers on whirlwind visits to the main attractions and shopping malls while the tourists experience Europe from a “Chinese bubble” with a Chinese tour leader presenting a Chinese version of Europe, Chinese food on their daily menu, and mainly Chinese owned or connected businesses providing other services. All this leaves many Chinese visitors disappointed with their Europe experience while such tours simultaneously provide relatively few opportunities for small European tourism entrepreneurs to cut a slice of this cake.

However, the Chinese outbound market is in constant flux. Today, over 40 percent of outbound Chinese travel already consists of independent tourists (FITs), who prefer to explore a destination by themselves or in small groups, with family or friends. Much like their Western counterparts, these FITs are looking for unique, customized experiences in which authenticity, local food and culture but also nature is increasingly important. Does the rise of independent travel from China imply even less business for independent European tourism entrepreneurs such as guides or does this perhaps open up a market full of new opportunities?

14:00-14:30 Discussion

15:00-16:30 Tour of Visby.

As part of the seminar’s program, you are welcome to join us in a guided tour of Visby with our local tour guides, Marina and Gunnar. We’ll meet in the foyer of Almedalen public library. Wear warm clothing and comfortable shoes. Everyone is welcome. The tour is free and will be in English.

Day 2 – 8th December 2017

10:00-10:30

Noel Salazar (Research Professor, Dept. of Social and Cultural Anthropology University of Leuven, Belgium)

Sustainability or resilience? Preparing the future of tour guiding in tourism

Sustainability mitigates or prevents change by maintaining resources above a normative safe level, whereas resilience adapts to change by attempting to build capacity to return to a desired state following both anticipated and unanticipated disruptions. Sustainability emphasizes aspirational goals associated with the careful use of resources and ensuring provision for future generations. Resilience is pragmatic and inclusive of a range of responses that may or may not align with sustainability principles. This presentation will reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of both paradigms in preparing tour guides for the volatile future of tourism.
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 - 11:30
Hans Gelter (PhD Former Associate Professor in Experience Production Luleå University of Technology Luleå, Sweden and owner and guide at Guide Natura Piteå, Sweden)

The transmodern guide – beyond co-production and traditional sustainability
Today tourism is undergoing several paradigm shifts, such as moving from a service industry to the experience industry, moving from a market economic perspective to a "green" and “sustainable” perspective, and moving from analogue practices to a digital transformation. In the middle of these paradigm shifts stands the guide responsible for the “moment of trough” towards the guests, in stark need for guidance in respect to these business transformations. Based on my own praxis as tour- and nature guide, research and education in experience production and guiding, I will analyse some aspects of these transformations. I will discuss types of guides and their aims, guiding through and for sustainability, and outline the perspective of the transmodern guide in the transformative economy.

11:30-13:00 Discussion and Final Reflections on the Seminar.

Where to from now?