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Abstract

Tourist perception patterns seem to be standardized by a powerful tourist industry and its commercial photography. But, do tourists really gaze the way guide books and advertising tell them to gaze? To answer this question, private holiday snapshots constitute a valuable source. They should be analysed, however, within the media, in which they are usually kept: photographic albums. Just like autobiographies or Oral History interviews, private photographic albums have a narrative structure containing various image categories.

This paper analyses a series of 45 private photo albums of a much-travelling German couple between the 1950ies and the 1980ies. Concentrating on selected examples, it studies the complex mechanisms of gaze construction and tourist perception. After some theoretical remarks, I will present the album series and discuss different picture types as part of the album’s narrative structure.

This case study is part of a recently finished PhD thesis studying tourist perception patterns and visual consumption in post-war West German tourism, using mainly pictorial evidence.

Holiday snapshots and the standardized Tourist Gaze

In modern mass tourism, tourist perception patterns are widely believed to be constructed and standardized by a powerful tourist industry. Since Karl Baedeker and Thomas Cook, guide books standardize the sights, the sights are being assembled to package tours, which then are sold as a mass consumer good (Enzensberger 1958, cf. Pagenstecher 2003a). The commercial photography in tourism marketing seems to determine the tourists’ gaze on landscapes, buildings and cultures. Individual travel routes follow the sights prescribed in guidebooks, travel photography only reproduces the clichés found in advertising brochures.

But, how far does the manipulative power of tourist industry reach? This is basically an empirical question. Its answer depends on the travel type, the country, the social and demographic group and the period we are looking at. This paper studies post-war German tourism, i.e. the gaze of West German tourists between the 1950s and the 1980s. In that period, the industry’s influence seems to be restricted: Statistics show that almost 90 % of
Germans travelled individually and that personal experiences and oral recommendations by friends and relatives were more important for decisions about where to go than the activities of tourism industry (Pagenstecher 2003, 159ff.). On the other hand, tourist advertising became more and more professional since World War II. Case studies prove that tour operator catalogues and local tourist brochures developed a more aggressive and standardized gaze-construction, especially since the 1970ies (Pagenstecher 2003a).

It is unclear, however, how successful this marketing was. Do tourists really gaze the way guide books and advertising tell them to gaze? This is a difficult question, because we do not know to what extent this advertised gaze was incorporated by the individual vacationers in their own way of seeing. How can we find out about the tourists’ individual perception patterns?

Private holiday snapshots constitute a valuable, widespread and direct pictorial evidence for studying the tourist gaze. Yet, instead of interesting approaches (eg. Albers & James, 1988; Crouch & Lübbren, 2003; Mandel, 1996), refined methods and techniques of a “Visual History” are still missing. The lack of academic interest in analysing pictures, especially on part of historians, is even stronger in the case of non-professional and non-published amateur photography. Quantitative or aesthetic approaches and simple comparisons would neglect the specific private and biographical context of private photography. Therefore, I want to emphasize the importance of the media, in which snapshots are usually stored and presented: private photographic albums. Photo albums constitute a specific genre rarely analysed even by photo-historians. Archives and museums keep them often uncatalogued, if they collect them at all.

Because of their private destination, snapshots are difficult to understand. It is fairly easy to laugh or look down on them from a technical or aesthetic point of view, but that doesn’t help us in studying the individual travel experience. To analyse these silly, blurred, ubiquitous, seemingly ever-equal holiday snapshots, we must understand the functions of private and touristic photography. Private photography in general serves to keep up personal memories, to demonstrate personal identity and to strengthen family integration. While travelling, taking snapshots can structure the abundance of new impressions and allow a self-determined and creative appropriation and digestion of the holiday world. It fulfills the usual tourist role and reassures the bored or anxious travellers. After coming back, it makes it possible to communicate one’s own experiences and gain social prestige by telling them to others.

**Photo albums as autobiographical sources**

The interpretation of private holiday pictures must consider the media in which they are usually stored and presented, and analyse photo albums as an autobiographic source.
Because the album changed its function: While it served to demonstrate familiar or social status in the 19th century, it became a individual-biographical narration in the 20th century, containing rather private snapshots not shown to everybody. Since photographs became cheaper, they were used in a playful, respectless and individual way. The working sphere and everyday-life, however, are almost absent. In post-war Germany, holiday photos covered around three quarters of all private snapshots (Pagenstecher 2003, 259ff., Starl 1995).

Especially in the 1950s and the 1960, private photo albums reached a quantitative and creative climax. Since the 1970s and 1980s, however, more and more snapshots are being stored unsystematically in shoe boxes or the photo shop’s envelops. The competition of slides, videos and Photo CDs has become stronger, indicating that albums are no longer part of a current cultural praxis but element of a finished – bourgeois? – era.

As autobiographic sources, photo albums stand between diaries, memoirs and narrative interviews. They are less intimate and self-centered than diaries, but have creative and biographical ambitions, too. Taking pictures and fixing them into albums helps in the interpretation of one’s own personal development and in finding autobiographic orientation through the album’s narrative flow. Compared to written memoirs, albums restrict themselves largely on the subjects of holidays and leisure. They are not being published but do address a small public of relatives and friends which – for the owner – is a highly important authority.

Compared to narrative interviews, albums form a contemporary, non-reactive source, but have a similar narrative structure that can give hints to the biographically relevant system of meaning. Like Oral History, snapshot research as part of a broader Visual History is mainly interested in perception, remembering and interpretation patterns. It looks to the way of oral or pictorial telling, not so much to the facts being told. A narrative interview usually consists of different text forms like the chronological telling of events, the static description of situations and the legitimising argumentation (Rosenthal 1995). In many photo albums we can find the following four picture categories:

1. ‘standardised perception patterns’
2. ‘unexpected events’,
3. ‘daily routines’ and
4. ‘symbolic summaries’.

Before discussing some examples of these categories, I will present my source material and its biographical framework.
Source material and biographical framework

My evidence is a series of private photo albums in the Historical Archive of Tourism at Berlin Free University: A Berlin baker and his wife – I will call them Heinz and Elfriede Schmidt – had documented and described all their journeys between 1942 and 1982 in 45 albums. The size of this series is big, but not exceptional: A big album collection at Munich’s photo museum includes several similar series (Starl 1995). The albums were made shortly after each holiday, thus being a contemporary source that reflects their owners’ selection, order and interpretation at the time. Furthermore, they are an anonymous source: Because both spouses had died in the meantime, I could not interview them and had to gather all information from the albums which proved to be methodically challenging and time-consuming.

Ill. 1: Album page with private and professional pictures of Grossglockner High Alpine Road, Austria, 1967

The pictures are showing a somewhat aged couple without children from the urban lower middle class. The Schmidts’ travel biography started in the Nazi era with first hiking holidays in the Alps at the age of 30. Then there was a break – not during but after World War II. Towards the end of the 1950ies, their second travel career started with week-end excursions at the age of 50, followed by long automobile journeys through the Alps and the whole of Central and Southern Europe. This biography reflects the over-all tourist take-off around 1960, marked by automobilisation and travel abroad. After their retirement in the 1970ies, the Schmidts adopted a stable rhythm with beach vacations in summer and a mountain holiday in autumn. Instead of travelling around, they now enjoyed more relaxing vacations, thus reflecting the general rise of beach tourism and the collective gaze.

The Schmidts did not have great photographic ambitions; there are no lists about the date, time and technical details about the aperture of single pictures which we find in other snapshot series. The albums, however, are designed lovingly: Pictures and other media are being arranged in sequences or contrasting couples creating tension or telling small stories. The snapshots are being surrounded by many postcards, dried flowers, leaflets, maps, boat tickets or restaurant receipts. Like other post-war albums, this is a multi-medial, heterogeneous source – beautiful, but difficult to analyse. Both spouses were using the camera (see ill. 1, middle: „Who snaps whom?“), thus the authorship of individual pictures is not always clear. Exceptionally, the traditional gender roles – males govern photographic technology, females guard the family album – are not valid here. Apart from the captions, there are holiday chronicles typed on separate sheets of paper with a de-
tailed documentation of travel routes, events, daily kilometres, departure and arrival times, usage of gasoline and accommodation prices. These pedantic protocols give many background information for the image analysis, but arise the question why this couple did keep such an accurate record of their free time. This kind of symbolic work reflects an internalised work ethic persisting even in holidays which can also be found in albeit ironical quotations from the chronicles like “Laziness go away!” (1944 on holidays in Silesia).

Now I will present examples for the four different picture types mentioned earlier, starting with standardized perception patterns.

**Picture type 1: Standardized perception patterns**

By sticking professional postcards in their private albums and by copying postcard and brochure images with their own snapshots, the Schmidts incorporated standardized perception patterns in their album's narration. In 1967, for example, a series of professional pictures integrated into the album showed the crossing of the Großglockner pass in the Austrian Alps, an episode that lasted only three hours but definitely was a climax in the story of their three weeks' holidays. A central picture that can be found in many leaflets and guide books, too, showed the mountain peak together with the car-park above the glacier (see ill. 1, upper right). Next to this, the Schmidts put a very similar picture of their own’s, labelled “This way we saw him” (see ill. 1, upper left). With this appropriation of a gaze set in advance by advertising images, they legitimised their travel style by arguing to have seen everything important. At the same time, they reproduced this standardized gaze themselves.

Apart from tourist advertising, also elements of classic culture or popular advertising were being quoted. Like in written autobiographies, thus the authors integrated their individual experiences into a widely shared body of knowledge. But, with snapshot albums being rather humorous or frivolous, these quotations tend to be somewhat ironic. A picture of an aged lady friend of theirs’ sitting on a small rock in a mountain creek was captioned by the couple as “Loreley”, evoking parallels to Heinrich Heine’s poem about a beautiful blonde sitting on Loreley rock above the Rhine valley.

Ill. 2: Album page with picture postcard and private snapshot about Wasserburg in Bavaria, 1974

In 1974, the Schmidts juxtaposed a professional, colourful and rather kitschy postcard of the Bavarian city Wasserburg with their own, less spectacular snapshot (see ill. 2). The commentary read “Poetry and Prose”. Our couple was well aware of, and commented
ironically on their tourist gaze being manipulated by tourist industry and its embellished imagery.

**Picture type 2: Unexpected events**

On the other hand, these albums tell us about moments when the tourists willingly or unwillingly left behind the tourist role and experienced something unexpected. These events might be small and funny: The Schmidts snapped a guy guarding a car-park with a scooter. The events might be exotic adventures like taking pictures of veiled Muslim women in Yugoslavia knowing it was not allowed. They might as well be catastrophes like storms or floods. Increasingly, the Schmidts shot pictures of traffic accidents (see ill. 3).

Ill. 3: Snapshot of a wrecked car on an Italian motorway near Trento, 1977

Photos of other cars lying smashed at the side of the road reflected the relief to have been spared themselves. Like a talisman this picture warded off this daily danger by captivating it on celluloid. These stories of unexpected events are those that differ most from the standardized tourist gaze and show an amazement or even marvel of the unknown world outside.

**Picture type 3: Daily routines**

There are a lot of pictures about every-day situations, giving even the holiday a kind of daily routine. With the caption “Morning washing on the river Weser”, a picture shows Ms Schmidt in a negligee in the door of the bakery van that was being used as holiday car in the 1950ies (see ill. 4). One of the first self-made photos was devoted to this rather unspectacular moment.

Ill. 4: Snapshot of Ms Schmidt doing her morning washing on the banks of the river Weser, 1959

In 1975, the couple had themselves portrayed on the Italian Adriatic, enjoying an informal and relaxed beach life. Many more similar pictures as well as the detailed chronicle prove the importance of capturing one's own travel route and activities, regardless of general tourist sights. Holidays is not only visiting foreign places, but also a daily practice shared as couple or family. Its capturing and re-visiting through watching the albums together later on, strengthens the family integration which during every-day work is often
missing. At the same time, the authors of the albums demonstrate a certain habitus. An improvised morning toilet proves independence from organized luxury and tourist industry. Pictures of the cleaned car or the television back home on the other hand, demonstrate respectability.

**Picture type 4: Symbolic Summaries**

Every album contains symbolic summaries, usually put at the start and the end of a holiday’s story. Each holiday is being introduced by a title page framing this chapter of the narration with a certain atmosphere. Different from the maps and flags of the earlier active circular tours, paintings and flowers gave the Tyrol holidays of their later years a rather harmonic and peaceful setting. Most albums contain pictures of the moments of departure and return.

Ill. 5: Two snapshots of the Schmidts cleaning their car before departure, 1965

In 1965 for example, the spouses snapped each other while cleaning the car before leaving home (see ill. 5). These pictures show typical “rites de passage” in which the family car becomes a ritual object. Like all rituals, the act of departure includes purifying ceremonies. In 1967, several pictures were devoted to the return to daily life. This moment of transition made it worth taking pictures even of normal events like watching TV or washing clothes. In an ironic way, the Schmidts admitted to feel the envy of those who had to stay at home. In 1963, they took a picture of their dog, purporting to criticise them: “And everything without me!”

**Summary**

Photographic albums have a narrative structure with distinct categories of pictures. Their analysis can give us an insight into the complex mechanisms of gaze construction and tourist perception. It will be difficult, however, to use these categories for statistical comparisons. The quantitative content analysis is a very useful tool in photo research, especially for tourist advertising (cf. Pagenstecher 2003, 313ff.). Photo albums, however, are an autobiographical source that needs qualitative methods open to individual interpretation. Private holiday snapshots constitute a valuable, but difficult source for the analysis of tourist perception patterns. Approaches from different disciplines like the interview analysis developed in the Oral History tradition can be useful. Overall, we still need to elaborate more refined methods and techniques of a Visual History using pictorial evidence.
References


The tourist status of the hajj is problematic given the number of casualties that even in the 21st century continued to be suffered on the journey through the desert. The thermal spa as a tourist destination regardless of the pilgrimage associations with the site as a holy well or sacred spring is not necessarily a European invention, despite deriving its English-language label from Spa, an early resort in what is now Belgium. The oldest Japanese onsen (hot springs) were catering to bathers from at least the 6th century. Tourism has been a global phenomenon from its origins. Such holidays were experienced in a variety of ways because tourists had choices, and the destination resorts varied widely in history, culture, architecture, and visitor mix. Keywords: gastronomic brand, tourist brand, tourism in St. Petersburg. INTRODUCTION The purpose of this paper is to examine possible ways of building such a component of Saint-Petersburg tourism brand as its gastronomic brand that doesn’t play a prominent part in the promotion of this tourist destination at the present time. The important aspect of the research of the interaction between tourism and gastronomy is the examinations of travelers motivators. A lot of works have been written about travel motivators in general (for example: Baloglu & Uysal 1996; Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Witt & Wright 1992). The of tourists content themselves with rather modernized authenticity adapted to habitual taste sensations and gastronomic foundations. Tourists travel to various places from all nooks and corners of the world, and there are different types of holiday accommodations catering to their needs. This Vacayholics post attempts to take a basic inventory of them. Home / Uncategorized / 16 Different Types of Holiday Accommodations You Can Choose From. One of the most popular forms of accommodations in the West, these are cheaper than most hotels, safe, and provide a home-like atmosphere. Plus, the guests get an opportunity to interact with the other occupants as well as the owners of the residence. Motels. This is a type of free holiday accommodation that involves a written agreement between the house owner and the house sitter.