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Theorizing Mobility, Place and Adventure Tourism

1.1 Introduction

because you get paid so little here (laughs) you can never afford to go back, and my family isn’t loaded so [...]and the best times you know, when I took, I took the past four winters off, I had three months off each so I’ve done 260 days of boarding in the past four years, that’s fucking awesome you know?

The above quote comes from a 33-year-old British man who at the time of my fieldwork in Queenstown, New Zealand, considered to be the world’s adventure capital, had been living and working as a grounds person for a skydiving company for five years. For him, the little amount of money he earns in the adventure tourism industry is outweighed by his nonworking leisure time activities such as snowboarding, which carry much more cultural, network and thus symbolic capital within the subculture of the adventure tourism industry. From my 10-year comparative ethnographic study on the adventure tourism industry and long residency in Interlaken, Switzerland, I argue that the adventure tourism industry is located at the interface of labor, leisure, travel, mobility and migration, where boundaries are not only
becoming “blurry”, but in line with Duncan et al. (2013), also collapsing. This means viewing the margins of work and leisure, labor and play as not necessarily separated or clearly regulated spheres of daily social practice.

This man’s quote above also resonates with Giddens’ concern about the “mobile nature of self-identity” (1991: 81) within postindustrial lifestyles where personal choice and a plurality of lifestyle options reign. Indeed, for some privileged individuals, like the one above, choices are “part of a new cultural tendency, and indeed compulsion, to develop life plans and relationship stories in ever more inventive ways” (Elliott and Urry 2010: 90–91). Individuals involved in the adventure tourism industry from the time of its establishment in the 1980s have and continue to lead alternative lifestyles that are characterized by particular sociocultural, political-economic trends, where work and leisure have become meshed and imbued with different sociocultural values and thus symbolic meaning for the ideological construction of identity both individually and collectively.

In fact, this particular individual and the many more that I spoke with during my time in both Interlaken and Queenstown is a prime example of the “mobile lifestyle resident” and western nomad, whose identities and life experiences are characterized by choice, shifting mobilities and lifestyle experimentation due to the development of niche markets within the global new economy, where tourism, and more specifically, adventure tourism, a now global and cultural industry, relies on the commodification of experience, thrill and risk. Like many other forms of cultural tourism, adventure tourism becomes a dominant site for the mobility of ideas, capital, resources and individuals, where places, characterized principally by their topographical features and laidback lifestyles, are specifically equipped, toured and performed by different groups of people both on and offline.

The quote above encompasses many of the themes discussed throughout this book that have to do with labor, leisure, mobility, adventure, place and performance. The data for this study stems from a decade of ethnographic work based on my long-term residency in Interlaken, Switzerland (2001–2014) and personal experience within the adventure tourism industry itself, which I discuss in more detail in both
Chapters 3 and 7. Adventure tourism constitutes a major mode of tourist mobility—and one that is growing rapidly (Swarbrooke et al. 2003; McKay 2014). Within the context of adventure tourism, Interlaken, Switzerland and Queenstown, New Zealand have both become major global destinations, Interlaken due to its central geographical location within Europe and access to some of the highest peaks in the Swiss Alps and Queenstown because of its location in the Southern Alps marked by its “Global Adventure Badge” (Lonely Planet 2010: 301). Both towns are of similar size (15,000 inhabitants) and economically thrive on tourism. In fact, over 90% of the local economies of Interlaken and Queenstown are generated through tourism (Berwert 2006; Van Uden 2013), which are relevant for both countries’ national economies, making them key players within the global market of tourism.

With anywhere from 2 to 3 million visitors passing through annually, both places have become magnets for lifestyle mobility residents, lifestyle migrants, transnational migrant workers and adventure seekers (which I define in Chapter 3), making them ideal sites for investigating the social production of place, and how it has become meaningful for different groups of people (Tuan 1977; Agnew 1987; Cresswell 2004; Jaworski and Thurlow 2004; Massey 2005; Thurlow and Jaworski 2010, 2011a, b; Gonçalves 2018) as well as examining how places are embodied and performed linguistically, visually and thus semiotically by tourists, locals, tourism operators and marketing agencies to name but a few key social actors. In fact, it is precisely because these diverse groups of people and the combination of the anchored and the mobile feed off of each other that Interlaken and Queenstown become fascinating sites for social scientific inquiry and sociolinguistics more specifically.

For the most part, sociolinguists, applied linguists and linguistic anthropologists have been concerned with investigating language in tourism “as an important window into contemporary forms of economic, political and social change” (Heller et al. 2014: 425). As such, scholars have focused their attention on fleeting encounters between hosts and guests, the symbolic (and meta symbolic) uses of language within tourism domains, tensions between commodification and authenticity, performances of self and other, and contestations of identity claims with respect to individuals’ multilingual repertoires.
These are some of the ways in which Heller et al. (2014) propose tourism can be used “as a lens for a broader discussion of the sociolinguistics of late modernity” (ibid.). In these ways, scholars of language share a common concern with other social scientists (primarily sociologists and human geographers) around contested notions of “community”, “identity” and “place”. As scholars of language, a primary aim has been to better understand how language(s), multilingual repertoires and circulating discourses and other semiotic systems are deployed for reasons of authentication, commodification and meaning-making within the “new” economy that “foregrounds an intensified circulation of human, material, and symbolic resources” (Heller et al. 2014: 428).

In this book, which is situated within the subfield of the “sociolinguistics of tourism”, I am concerned with various complex processes pertaining to tourism and of adventure tourism in particular. First, I am concerned with the circulation of people as both tourists and transnational migrant workers in two global adventure meccas since these two distinct groups of people are currently considered to be the largest groups traversing the world to date, but for very different socioeconomical and political reasons. Second, I am interested in the ways in which places are experienced, performed and sold, and thus adopt a performative approach to place in my discussion of place-making practices. Third, I am interested in the semiotic industry of tourism and the commodification of adventure both online and offline, where thrill, risk and safety of “embodied challenges” are bottled up, packaged and sold linguistically, visually and thus semiotically, where individuals’ identities and bodies are reassessed and imbued with cultural, social and network capital. Fourth, I am interested in current theories of mobility that epistemologically question the boundaries and breakdown between labor, migration and leisure happening in contemporary times where the circulation of individuals, material and symbolic resources are taking place at rapid speeds. This discussion centers around places of play where a kind of post-precariat workforce has emerged as a result of distinct labor and immigration policies that have been created in order to both facilitate and block movement of people between certain nation-states in order to remain competitive within the global new economy. How mobility is theoretically being accounted for and empirically captured
in postmodern times does not only pertain to the participants of this study and my discussion of adventure tourism hubs, but also to me as a researcher and the methodological approach taken in this study, which is one of a global, multi-sited and mobile ethnography. Engaging in this type of method means that the research being carried out is inevitably epistemologically linked with mobility, and contributes to the existing literature on the sociolinguistics of tourism. All of these concerns and interests are discussed throughout various chapters in the book. I have written this book in a style that I hope is accessible to students at the graduate level (and above) and for individuals in sociolinguistics as well as tourism studies that are concerned with the intersection of language, labor, mobility/migration and leisure. In the next section, I discuss concepts such as mobilities, tourism, place and adventure in order to better understand how these notions have been discussed and theorized from different interdisciplinary perspectives.

1.2 Mobility and Mobilities

We are currently living in what Elliott and Urry have termed the “golden age of mobility” (2010: ix), where people seem to be moving more than ever before. In his 2007 book entitled Mobilities, Urry states that “it sometimes seems as if all the world were on the move” and continues by listing what he perceives to be “all the world” (2007: 3):

The early retired, international students, terrorists, members of diasporas, holiday makers, business people, slaves, sports stars, asylum seekers, refugees, backpackers, commuters, young mobile professionals, prostitutes, - these and many others – seem to find the contemporary world is their oyster or at least their destiny.

The individuals or groups of people mentioned above move around for different reasons. While some are mobile because they can be and due to their socioeconomic status such as holidaymakers, others, like refugees and asylum seekers may not necessarily be afforded such choices due to their sociopolitical situation. Regardless of what type of mobility
one is afforded, the scale of such travel is “immense” and considered by Sheller and Urry to be “the largest peaceful movement of people, flows, goods and capital” (2004: 3). The social changes implicated in such movements are connected to and perhaps even considered to be the consequence of certain processes of globalization (Giddens 1990, 2000) as well as innovative and mobile technologies within late or “new” modernity (Beck 1982; Giddens 2000) or what Bauman calls “liquid modernity” (2000).

The movement and contact of people, goods and capital has always been and continues to flow. Never before have Western societies experienced the pace and rate of such mobility, movement and “global complexities” (Thrift 1999; Urry 2003) whether we view them as “scapes” (Urry 2003) “flows” (Appadurai 2001; Pennycook 2007) “fluids” (Mol and Law 1994), “regions” or “networks” (Castells 1996, 2000, 2001) (but cf. Britain 2016 for a counter-argument). We have come a long way since the industrial revolution and the invention of the railroad (Schivelbusch 1986; Thrift 1996), which is considered to be a salient milestone within the context of mobility and the time-space compression (Cresswell 2006; Massey 1993; Urry 2003). We live in a world, where individuals, if afforded monetary funds and the luxury of time, can book a flight from point A to point B in a matter of minutes with just a few clicks of a button. For Giddens, we are living in a world that has never before existed which he terms “a global cosmopolitan society” (2010: 19) and as the first generation to experience and live in this kind of fast-paced, digitized and highly mobile society, we have yet to experience the consequences.

Indeed, many of us residing in the Western world live mobile lives, where travel has not only become routine, but for many has become a necessity and possibly even, a chore. With the invention of the mobile phone and all things “smart”, access to information and virtual travel is not only possible, but instantaneous. At the same time, it is important to realize that this access and speed also has the potential in many ways to stymy mobility. Nevertheless, it is astonishing to witness how technological gadgets continue to change so rapidly with new, better and faster functions and connections. We live in an age where four-year-olds have their own user names and even infants are able to maneuver ipads.
As an academic, being mobile is by no means foreign to me, but part of my job and daily routine. At the time of finishing this book, I was commuting every fortnight from Oslo, Norway where I work, to a small alpine village in Austria, where my family resides. Not only do I commute transnationally on a regular basis, but during university holidays, I move countries to visit my family in the States and attend conferences in all parts of the world. Booking a flight and hopping on a plane has become second nature to me and living out of a suitcase is something I can easily do although I don’t always like it (Gonçalves 2019). Being mobile and experiencing travel nowadays is considered to be the epitome and “part of the problem” (Minca and Oakes 2006: 1) of being modern (Sennett 1994; Cresswell 2006). And as a result, the terms mobility and modernity cannot be used without reference to the other.

The rate of my mobility slowed down a bit after having a child, but being on the move comes easily to me, and a process that I did not think about very seriously over the last few years. Elliott and Urry claim that, “people today travel 23 billion kilometers each year. By 2050 it is predicted that, if resource constraints do not intervene, this will increase fourfold to 106 billion kilometers each year” (2010: ix). Looking at these figures, one might question if really all the world is on the move? According to Mazareanu (2020) the year 2020 is expected to set a new record in terms of scheduled airline passengers with over 4.72 billion, which is around 137% higher than in 2004. These numbers will surely be affected by the recent coronavirus virus outbreak, but nevertheless these figures are projected to increase in the future. Indeed, we have to keep in mind that different types of mobility are reserved for different kinds of people, which often reflect their socioeconomic or sociopolitical status. Increased numbers of airline passengers worldwide reflect the growth of the global middle-class and resonate with Thurlow’s discussion of performing “post-class” ideologies that within the global political economy of life, everyone on a plane is elite and privileged (2016: 489). Despite knowing this, I was nevertheless surprised when we recently hired a 20-year-old au pair from the UK, who was still waiting for her passport to come through in order to travel. I know and am even related to many nonmobile people like certain family members in Brazil and friends in the US who do not have passports, but because
of my intercultural upbringing and current employment, I have been granted numerous possibilities and opportunities for being on the move for quite some time. And while being mobile bears positive connotations like freedom, excitement and novelty, individuals that lead such lifestyles are also confronted with anxiety, emotional disconnection and depression (Elliott and Urry 2010: 9; Gonçalves 2018, 2019). It is now, with our au pair that questions of mobility have and continue to enter our family discussions regularly. 

Before her employment with us, our au pair had never left England and after just 3 days with our family, she had already traveled to two different countries. She experiences mobility differently in Switzerland and Austria than she did in the UK. In the UK, she either walked everywhere or used her bike. She does not drive herself but is often a passenger in cars of others. When we are in Switzerland, she either walks, uses a bike, hops on a bus and occasionally, even uses the train. In Austria, she walks or is a passenger in someone’s car or a passenger in the local village shuttle bus. Because she was not used to being on a train in the UK very often, the first time she used a train in Switzerland on her own was connected to feelings of nervousness, anxiety and even fear. She was nervous she would get the wrong train, afraid she would miss the stop, anxious about getting lost and scared to ask anyone any questions because she did not speak Standard German or the local Swiss German “Bernese” dialect. These were the issues I was confronted with from her before she set off to explore the small Alpine village of Wengen (and go sightseeing) on one of her days off. Instead of being relaxed and even excited for the time off and perhaps even short “adventure”, she was absolutely overwhelmed by several factors, namely, being in a foreign country, being on her own, employing different means of transportation she was not familiar with, and not speaking the local language. She was responsible for herself during this time and had to make certain decisions she was not used to making. Taken out of this specific context, one could look at these factors and connect them to the terms “tourist” and “tourism”, terms that have been and continue to be disputed within different academic circles and which I will come back to a bit later.

Before delving into definitions though, one might think of tourism as having positive connotations attached to leisure activities, an
unstructured timetable, various options of how to spend one’s time, but this was clearly not how our au pair viewed her time off to go “sightseeing”. Franklin states that, “tourism is often something of a paradox” because “it is commonly portrayed as an escape from work and essentially about pleasure but so many forms and experiences of tourism seem to involve, on the face of it, the opposite” (2003: 3, italics in original). Franklin’s description of tourism fits in well with what our au pair experienced that day. She was not experiencing pleasure or an escape by any means, but was in fact quite stressed out about her upcoming journey. While she may not have had a timetable to stick to, she had to stick to the train’s timetable. In order to make and take the right train, she had to calculate how many minutes she required to be at the station in advance, which influenced how she would get to the train station in the first place, either by taking her bike or walking. Then she had to calculate the time she wanted to spend up in Wengen based on the number of trains available to get back home again later that evening. For her, this meant more choices, more options, more calculations and ultimately more stress rather than a day off considered to be fun, relaxing and even pleasurable. Bauman has commented on such experiences when he states, “there are many hardships one needs to suffer for the sake of tourist’s freedom: the impossibility of slowing down, uncertainty wrapping every choice [and] risks attached to every decision” (1998: 98). Such hardships were ones that our au pair did experience on that particular day, but eventually she was able to overcome them and she even managed to enjoy herself as well as the scenic mountain landscapes from Wengen. This anecdote about our au pair exemplifies how certain acts of mobility and tourist performances go hand in hand. Sheller and Urry (2004: 5) assert that, “tourism and mobility cannot be viewed as two separate entities but part and parcel of the same set of complex and interconnected systems”.

At this point it makes sense to review some of the literature surrounding these theoretical frameworks, concepts and definitions, many of which are not only contested, but “fuzzy”. Coming back to my au pair anecdote, which I initially described as a form of “tourism”, could in fact be considered problematic because of tourism’s status. Tourism, because it is often equated with travel, day-tripping and even culture
has been epistemologically questioned (Rojek and Urry 1997), which will be discussed in the following sections that address the discourse of escapism, the “touristic manner” and the tourism industry.

1.3 The Discourse of Escapism

Scholars in both the past and present have conceptualized tourism and modernity as a circulating discourse of escapism. According to Urry (2002: 5):

If people do not travel, they lose status: travel is the marker of status. It is a crucial element of modern life to feel that travel and holidays are necessary. ‘I need a holiday’ is the surest reflection of a modern discourse based on the idea that people’s physical and mental health will be restored if only they can ‘get away’ from time to time.

Gottlieb asserts that individuals partaking on a vacation or holiday are precisely looking for the inversion of the everyday (1982) while Robinson makes a distinction between the pleasurable experiences tourism offers to individuals as being out of the ordinary or even extraordinary from their everyday lives (1976: 1570). This is what Löfgren terms the “optimistic tone of the Enlightenment”:

[.....] where the credo of modernity is ‘life can always be improved’. To be part of the modern project is to be on the move, advancing through unknown terrain, making new discoveries, getting rid of old habits and traditions, striding freely forward with an open, but also restless mind. (1999: 268)

The urge to escape from “normal life” as Franklin calls it emerged in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to the “new domesticity of the urban bourgeoisie” where work regulation and wage labor contributed to the concept of “free” leisure time within a new industrial society (Löfgren 1999: 269). Embarking on a holiday meant leaving one’s home and workplace by physically going to another place, where work
demands and daily routines were diminished, a time when “vacation life became territorialized hedonism” (ibid.). In *The Art of Travel*, De Botton (2002) talks about the French writer and poet Charles Baudelaire, who wrote extensively about the paradoxes of traveling in the mid to late nineteenth century. In one of his writings, he draws on the metaphors of hospitals and patients to express his ambivalent views about traveling and individuals’ desires to be in different places:

Life is a hospital in which every patient is obsessed with changing beds: this one wants to suffer in front of the radiator, and that one thinks he’d get better if he was by the window […] it always seems to me that I’ll be well where I am not, and this question of moving is one that I’m forever entertaining with my soul. (Baudelaire, as quoted in De Botton 2002: 32)

For Baudelaire, traveling and physically moving from one’s current location to another is an act individuals’ have become “obsessed” with, truly believing that a change of scenery would heal the wounds, ailments and diseases of their daily sufferings. Moreover, he too readily admits that he is convinced of correlating happiness and well-being to the alteration of place although frankly questioning the ideas of movement and mobility altogether. The discourse of moving places, escapism and its relation to one’s well-being has been circulating for well over a century and as a result, become an ideology of modern times. According to Kracauer:

more and more travel is becoming the incomparable occasion to be somewhere other than the very place one habitually is. It fulfills its decisive function as spatial transformation, as a temporary change of location […] travel has been reduced to a pure experience of space. (1995: 66)

Kracauer draws on the contrasts of being home versus being somewhere else highlighting the saliency between the familiar and unfamiliar, the known versus the unknown and perhaps even the mundane versus the exciting. For Franklin, different scholars have varying explanations of tourism, whether it is drawing on contrasts or employing the metaphor
of escape “highlighting the essential problematic conditions of everyday life in modern capitalist societies” (2003: 29). He goes on further to postulate that:

For many the realm of work, whether at home or in the labour market, involves a series of pressured, alienating and stressful conditions that require the occasional timeout. A change being as good as a rest? Probably not. And are holidays truly restful or do they demand energy, hard work and endurance? Mine frequently do. (Franklin 2003: 29)

The notion of escapism is also mentioned in Minca and Oakes’s (2006: 14) introductory chapter about the paradoxes of travel. They state that “while we like to think of travel as an escape of place, we have come to believe that such an escape is a comforting myth and at worst an ideology of control” (2006: 1). A few pages later, however, they admit to how it can be perceived and conceived by others when they state:

Travel, we suggest, emerges from an impulse to order the world; it can be conceived as a kind of escape from the disorder that confronts us in place. To take to the road, to disavow, if only temporarily, one’s home place for the open space of mobility, is to pay homage to our need for order. And the space of travel offers “a special form of comfort, a reassuring presence” (Casey 1997: 338). Travel seems to bring us closer to the abstract qualities of space as opposed to lived messiness of place, to the universal categories that space allows for.

For Minca and Oakes, traveling is still very much connected to changing one’s physical environment even if for a short time. For them, travel allows individuals to, in some ways, order our world and perhaps categorize our time by delegating free and leisure time as opposed to working time, where designated chunks of time are reserved for particular activities or specific ways of behaving, i.e., relaxing on holiday versus concentrating on work tasks. For these scholars, thinking about these distinct types of behaviors and performances is correlated onto different places and spaces even if only temporarily and ideologically. Like much of the work done in human geography, these scholars also view
the notions of place and space as inseparable from the other, where place allows for lived messiness and disorder, space is open, abstract and allows for endless travel in order to seek and find order within the disorder of everyday life. They regard travel as both experiencing and making sense of place and where “place-making is infused with travel and all the baggage that gets shipped along the way- difference, strangeness, alienation, nostalgia, homesickness, inspiration, fear, frustrations, hopes, and expectations fulfilled and dashed (2006: 1)”, Franklin claims that “tourism is not synonymous with travel” (2003: 11).

For Franklin, tourism is a modern stance to the world, “an interest and curiosity in the world beyond our own immediate lives and circles” (ibid.). This curiosity in the Other and of the foreign that is connected to tourism slowly developed along with the modernization of nation-states. The speed at which the developments of international trade and universal discourses occurred meant that travel and the knowledge gained during such travel rendered individuals cultural capital (Franklin 2003: 6). The changes and novelty individuals experienced through travel within a consumer society were by all means “modern” and even addictive, so much so that over time, tourism “required less and less effort to travel in order to obtain the same degree of sensation and difference that formerly only travel could provide” (ibid.).

This is due to the globalizing forces many of us located in the Western world have been experiencing whether we travel or even stay at home. The effects of globalization mean that the world has become undeniably touristic. In his book, A Mad World, My Masters, Simpson states:

The feeling is growing, especially in the United States, that there is no need to travel abroad, since abroad is traveling to you. In Washington DC I have been driven by a taxi driver who had been the leader of an Afghan mujaheddin group, and in Paris by another who had been an Iranian air force general. In Denver I once found a taxi was driven by a North Korean who spoke not a single recognizable word of English, and in New York City a taxi driver from, I think, Equatorial Guinea who had no idea where or what Wall Street was. (2001: xxiv)
The feeling of not having to be mobile in order to experience “otherness” or a taste of the so-called “exotic” or “foreign” is a theme that not only rings true in major US city centers, but probably in most global metropolises as well as smaller towns and villages that economically thrive on tourism (Oakes 2006). From my experiences of living in a small village in central Switzerland to an even smaller village in the Austrian Alps, both of which economically thrive on tourism, I can state that this is indeed my experience. Despite my mobility and frequent traveling, I would still encounter different people and cultures from all over the world even if I just remained “immobile” in either village. Both places are considered to be tourist “hot spots” within their respective countries and are also marketed as such. As a result, a plethora of different types of people from all over the world pass through them regularly resulting in “cultural mixing” (Rojek 1997: 11). In other words, since people travel, their cultures and certain cultural artifacts travel with them as well.

The effects of mobility, globalization and cultural mixing suggest that places are becoming similar. An individual can travel far or near to visit similar cafés (think Starbucks) (Moon and Quelch 2003), restaurants and shops that they might find in their local hometowns or cities. This leads Franklin to maintain that “this new touristic world of flows, migrations and what Urry (2000) calls *travellings* of peoples and objects” (2003: 7) is not confined to one specific place or country, but found all over the world. Furthermore, Franklin maintains that the world has become “touristic” precisely because of the flow of people and goods—tourism has been one of the “more important but neglected cultural processes of globalization” (2003: 8).

### 1.4 Tourism and the Tourism Industry

According to Löfgren (1999: 6) “the label ‘the tourist industry’ bundles together very different kinds of actors” ranging from licensed guides in Marrakech to helicopter pilots selling scenic flights in Hawaii to migrant laborers doing hotel laundry. The list could go on depending on what type of tourism one is referring to and in which part of the
The notion of tourism should perhaps be seen as an umbrella term, under which different and often quite specific forms of tourism or tourist activities fall, which now exist in the world. Take for instance, ecotourism (Duffy 2004), heritage tourism (Urry 2002); shantytown tourism or "favela tours" (Jaguaribe and Hetherington 2004), and even war tourism (Adams 2006), meaning that "tourism is growing into a series of ‘tourisms’" (Parrinello 1993: 239). Buckart defines tourism as denoting "the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places they normally live" (1974: v). In a similar vein, Mathieson and Wall understand tourism as "the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to care to their need" (1982: 1). O’Reilly argues that many theorists (Graburn 1989; Smith 1989; Voase 1995) all define tourism more by what it is not than what it is—it is not home and it is not work; it is a change of scenery and lifestyle, an inversion of the normal (2000: 43).

In line with this way of thinking, Urry states that tourism "is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organized as separated and regulated spheres of social practice in modern societies (2002: 2)."

Franklin claims that such formal definitions of tourism are "driven by the desire to quantify tourism and to measure the performance of the tourism economy, [which] not only denude tourism of some of its more interesting and important characteristics [but] tend to reduce tourism to acts of leisure and recreation at the end of acts of travel" (2003: 27–28). This type of reductionist view is contrasted by others such as Weaver and Opperman, who see tourism as all-encompassing when they state:

Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction among tourists, business suppliers, host governments, host communities, origin governments, universities, community colleges and non-governmental organizations, in the process of attracting, transporting, hosting and managing these tourists and other visitors. (2000: 3)
Their definition of tourism has led Franklin to state that from such a perspective, tourism is viewed as part of the entertainment industry. This latter view obscures the social significance of tourism and the agentive nature of tourists, which focuses their attention on the tourism industry, its companies, designers and organizers (Franklin 2003: 28) while the former viewpoint misses locating tourism as a mode of relating to the world in postmodern cultures which:

Undermines the consumptive, playful, ironic, intellectual, mental, passive, romantic, aesthetic, reflexive, performative and spiritual content of tourism whilst overemphasizing mobile, physical, active and muscular dimensions. (Franklin 2003: 28)

Like many terms within the social sciences, we see here that the concept of tourism is a “fuzzy” one and used differently by scholars depending on their research agendas. Regardless of how tourism is defined and understood, what we do know about tourism is that it is “widely pronounced as the biggest industry in the world generating well over $750 billion worth of international tourism receipts in 2005 […]”. The industry is worth some $8 trillion or 5.2 trillion euros and employs around 240 million people a year (World Travel and Tourism Council) (Adey 2010: 1–2). More recent figures have estimated its global economic contribution to be over 7.6 trillion US dollars in 2016 and on a global level, the tourism industry continues to experience steady growth annually with international tourist arrivals having increased from 528 million in 2005 to 1.19 billion in 2015 with projections to exceed 1.8 billion by 2030 (Statista 2018). These numbers are impressive and robust, so much so that after reading such figures, one might be left wondering who is not affected by the global forces of tourism either directly or indirectly and how do such forces and flows impact and influence our lives on a daily basis? The striking sturdiness of tourism as an industry continues to prevail even in times of economic crises
Löfgren’s quote is interesting for several reasons. First, he admits that research on tourism has become an industry and a specific field of academic interest probed by different fields of inquiry. And while such an endeavor may not always be “good”, in his eyes, the study of tourism must go beyond the boundaries of so-called “tourism research”. Second, he criticizes the so-called “experts” of tourism studies for legitimizing their “frivolous” topics suggesting that their research is not in any way scholarly or serious and as a result, this work must be connected to the economic and social relevance of the study, which is most likely to be embedded within a larger socioeconomic, cultural and political context.

Connecting tourism research to the fields of economics and sociology in my opinion means connecting the microlevel of analysis (i.e., the ways in which individuals talk about their experiences and their subjective performativities) to the larger macro social structures and “the workings of the modern world”. Of course, one must not forget that Löfgren’s work is over 15 years-old and since that time, a lot of research has been done that looks at tourism as part and parcel of the modern world rather than as a separate entity existing within its own bubble. In fact, not long after Löfgren’s book came out, Franklin’s introductory book on tourism claimed something quite similar, namely that

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1The question of whether tourism is considered to be one industry only has been debated (cf. Smith 1988, 1991, 1993; Leiper 1990).
“tourism cannot be viewed and studied as a detachable phenomenon because it is blended into everyday life and global flows of people and things” (2003: 2). Thinking of tourism from this perspective has led Thurlow and Jaworski to talk about tourism as a form of “banal globalization” (2010). The approach Franklin takes in his book coincides with and indeed has influenced more recent studies of sociolinguistics, tourism and globalization (Heller et al. 2014; Moriarty 2015). Unlike earlier accounts that viewed tourism as a set of commercial activities that focused their attention on the “tourist gaze” (Urry 2002) and the saliency and search for authenticity (Culler 1981; MacCannell 1989; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Wang 1999), Franklin sees tourism as a “complex set of social and cultural phenomena” which requires theoretical pluralism (ibid.). Similar to Rojek and Urry (1997) the discourses surrounding tourism and travel need to be viewed as a multifaceted and intertwining set of social discourses and practices that go beyond a set of economic ones since viewing tourism as such would be considered somewhat limiting. Franklin (2003) regards tourism in much the same vein. For him, tourism can no longer be seen as just a commercial exercise, but rather understood as a “cultural activity”, which has become infused into our everyday lives. This presupposes that our everyday lives and the world we inhabit has slowly become “indistinguishable from the touristic world” (2003: 5). In an earlier text, Franklin and Crang (2001) state that:

Tourism is no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption: tourism has broken away from its beginnings as a relatively minor and ephemeral ritual of modern national life to become a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organized.

Franklin makes the argument that the way we live our lives is very similar to certain tourist performances and due to these similarities, “normal life” isn’t so different from life when one is on holiday (cf. Ritzer 1996; Ritzer and Liska 2006 on *McDonaldization*). Franklin and Crang go on further to state that:
tourism is now such a significant dimension to global social life that it can no longer be conceived of as merely what happens at the self-styled tourist sites and encounters involving tourists away from home […] but the distinction between the everyday and holiday are entirely blurred. (2001: 8)

In order to understand this blurriness more clearly, Franklin hones in on key concepts of the so-called “local” and the “touristic manner”:

Most places are now on some tourist trail or another, or at least, not far from one. In addition, most of the things we like to do in our usual leisure time double up as touristic activities and shared spaces. This is as much true as hanging out in fashionable cafés as it is for local art exhibitions and museums or local theme parks, shopping malls, food halls, beaches, sporting activities and local nature features. In fact, many leisure investments made ostensibly for tourists and tourism rely on the fact that local people will visit them too, and as the global population becomes increasingly settled in larger cities, so the metropolitan populations around each investment become ever more significant. (2003: 5)

Franklin’s assertion that what people do when they are tourists is very similar to what people do in their normal lives is what he refers to as the “tourist manner” and that investigation into these practices (both normal and touristic) is what is now called for especially as they are viewed against the backdrop of globalization. In these ways, such practices have become normalized and therefore to some extent also routinized. I argue, however, that engaging in adventure tourist pursuits does not resonate well with Franklin’s notion of the “touristic manner”, especially those that are done outside of city centers in alpine towns like Queenstown and Interlaken. The individuals I spoke with, especially, tourists, all referred to their trips, travels and adventure activities as exceptional and a social and cultural practice and endeavor that is considered by them and many others as quite out of the ordinary. In fact, one might claim that this is adventure tourism’s defining feature, namely, that it is so unlike anything one would do during their average daily life. This is indeed the case for bungee jumping (the focus of Chapter 5). Nevertheless, this same point does not necessarily hold true for locals, lifestyle mobile residents or transnational migrant workers, whose
daily work routines may indeed be characterized as “mundane” even if it requires jumping out of a helicopter with a client attached to you for an “epic” skydiving experience (cf. Sharpe 2005 for a discussion of emotional labor among adventure guides). Indeed, for those directly involved in the adventure tourism industry, whether it was a bungee master, paragliding pilot or river rafting guide, the work they do may be characterized and constructed as alternative based on their leisure time activities, but they are nevertheless occupations that require training, technique, skill and experience and almost always regarded as “work”.

In thinking about tourism, mobility and globalization processes, we are also inevitably forced to think about the notion of place. For many individuals and holidaymakers, tourism and travel is conceived of being in a different place, physically relocating there by means of different transportation outlets whether by car, train, boat, airplane or a combination of them. Places, whether they intentionally cater to tourists or not are places where other individuals and locals reside. In this way, Minca and Oakes claim that:

Any study of travel must also raise questions about the meaning of home, about belonging, about how places get made and remade. Travel occurs in places, places that are homes to others. And travelers have homes that they have left for some reason but to which they will most likely return. (2006: 1)

From this perspective, place becomes many things to different people who inhabit a particular place for a specific amount of time. It is also within this quote that place is understood as changing and shifting by being *made* and *re-made*. This reflects the way that current views of place have come to be talked about and theorized, which I discuss in the following section.

### 1.5 Place

Under the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry 2004), all places are considered to be dynamic and regarded as “places of movement” that are changing and in constant flux (Cresswell 2004; Massey 1997).
Although these geographical places do not physically move, places are mobile because they “change and shift shape over time as new building constructions, transport systems, and patterns of migration alter the physical, cultural and linguistic landscape of the site” (Stroud and Jegels 2014). Changes in landscapes are brought about by different social actors, whose often invisible yet traceable constitutive activities are done through space ownership, control, contestation or abandonment resulting in a layered simultaneity of outcomes, which lay the foundations for future outcomes and developments (Jaworski 2014: 530; Blommaert 2013).

In the 1960s and 1970s humanistic geographers (Lukerman 1964; Relph 1976) attempted to define the concept of place. The 1970s was the era in which “spatial science was born”, and a time when generalizations could be made and laws were both universal and applicable (Cresswell 2004: 19). According to Cresswell, “the term space appeals to the nomothetic or generalizing impulse of science” (ibid.). Within this perspective, the notion of place simply became congruent with location and fixity. By the late 1970s, humanistic geographers (Tuan 1977; Buttimer and Seamon 1980; Relph 1976) became concerned with the concept of place by drawing on the philosophies of phenomenology and existentialism. Place was no longer regarded as a geographic locale, but concerned with a way of being-in-the-world (Cresswell 2004: 20). This view meant conceptualizing place as meaningful and connected to subjective human experiences and individuals’ perceptions of the world (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977).

For both Relph and Tuan, the notions of space and place were required for a suitable definition of each concept as Relph (1976: 8) states:

Space is amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described and analyzed. Yet, however, we feel we explain space, there is nearly always some associated sense or concept of place. In general it seems that space provides the concept for places but derives its meaning from particular places.
This view of place draws on phenomenology and thus human experiences of place. Concerned with the discovery of essences, the phenomenological approach to place asks what makes a place a place? (Cresswell 2004: 23).

1.5.1 The Performance of Place

We know that human geographers have long claimed that place is negotiated by individuals’ subjective experiences (Entrikin 1991; Tuan 1977, 1991) and under the new mobilities paradigm, which has been influenced by both the cultural and spatial turns within the social sciences, place is not only experienced but “intermittently toured and performed” (Urry 2006: vii).

Drawing on performance theory (Butler 1990, 1993; Schein 1999), which has its genealogies in philosophy, linguistics, sociology and theater studies has produced several works about how place is regarded as “material, embodied, contingent, networked and performed” (Urry 2006: viii) (cf. Veijola and Jokinen 1994; Crouch 1999 [2013]; Edensor 2001; Saldanha 2002; Coleman and Crang 2002; Baerenholdt et al. 2004; Sheller and Urry 2004; Minca and Oakes 2006; Thurlow and Jaworski 2014). Applying performative theory to tourism studies means emphasizing the embodied perspective while simultaneously building on the semiotics of tourism, visual theories of tourism (Franklin 2003) that go well beyond the “tourist gaze” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2014). As Saldanha states: “don’t tourists swim, climb, stroll, ski, relax, become bored perhaps, or even ill; don’t they go to other places to taste, smell, listen, dance, get drunk, have sex?” (2002: 43). Adopting an embodied perspective means going beyond the visual. Although tourism has always been connected to the senses and especially to the sense of sight (Berger 1972; Arendt 1978; Adler 1989; Rojek and Urry 1997) Franklin (2003: 9) asserts that within the field of tourism studies as the 1990s faded into the 2000s more people wanted to get their hands on the world, to taste it, feel it, smell it and importantly, do things with it and not just look at it. In all fairness, the notion of performance
and *doing* within the field of tourism has its roots in the early 1980s. Franklin and Crang state that:

The parallels of tourism and semiotics were spelled out in a path-breaking article by Jonathan Culler (1981) some 20 years ago. There he outlined the way tourism as language acts to mark out, signify and categorize the world. If we take this seriously we see a version of semiosis where ‘display not only shows and speaks, *it does* (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1988: 6). Tourism is a productive system that fuses discourse, materiality and practice. There are now developing avenues of thinking trying to move beyond a study of representation towards seeing tourism as a system of presencing and performance. Thus some accounts focus on the nature of so much tourism as performances, from folk dance to performing dolphins. (2001: 17)

Tourism as such is now regarded as a set of sociocultural activities and practices that are actively performed by different types of agents as well as being regarded as a “wide-ranging feature of mobility” (Rojek and Urry 1997: 10). As such, tourism involves massive flows of many things, some of which include people, capital, goods, information, images, objects, technologies, ideas, discourses, etc. (ibid.). The rate of such flows within our globally complex world (Urry 2003) has lead many to experience tourism and “fast-time”. Franklin describes this state as:

*The tyranny of the present is not boredom or the lack of difference and colour or excitement in our lives but the opposite: we are over-excited, bombarded by stimulation, information, possibilities, connections and access. It is claimed that our lives are too busy; we are trying to do too much too often. (2003: 13)*

The concept of fast-time and how it relates to tourism is key for the understanding of this book and especially how it is propagated within the context of adventure tourism. While there is indeed variation experienced in terms of the rate in which people and therefore cultures are traveling nowadays, the rate of mobility has shifted due to technological advances and the speeding up of images and signs in the late
twentieth century (Rojek 1997) leading Kracauer to talk about “the
cult of distraction” within his discussion of tourism (1995). This “fast-
time” phenomena correlates well with what other scholars refer to as the
“time-space compression” (Cresswell 2006; Massey 1993; Urry 2003)
and attempting to do too much in too little time by the drive to not only “see it all”, but “do it all” and thus “experiencing it all” too. In fact,
the term FOMO has been dubbed in internet lingo to depict the fear of missing out with regards to various social media sites and platforms like Instagram and Facebook, where individuals showcase and “share” their experiences with others. This is especially true within the context of adventure tourism, to which I now turn.

1.6 Adventure Tourism: An Overview

The word adventure is very subjective and connotes different things to different people. From a historical perspective, adventure has been linked to the concept of exploration of faraway, foreign places in the search of new land and territory as well as natural resources and wealth. The terms adventure and exploration may not only make us think of famous explorers of the fifteenth century such as Christopher Columbus or Vasco de Gama, but also of much earlier and historical accounts of explorations such as Pytheas voyage to the Arctic Circle (c. 330 BC). We may also be inclined to think of classic literary stories of adventure, which include Homer’s Odyssey written in the eighth-century BC, Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales written in the fourteenth century, Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels (1726), Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884) or even Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865). The shared themes within these texts are those of individuals’ journeys into the unknown, confrontation with new people, strange animals or terrain and ultimately experiencing something different and perhaps even scary to one’s ordinary, mundane life, which often, but not always ended in a victorious sense of accomplishment. The Oxford English Dictionary defines adventure as “a chance of danger or loss; risk, jeopardy; a hazardous enterprise or performance” (Brown 1993: 31).
The notion of adventure implies connotations of risk, jeopardy and wilderness (Weber 2001), however, not all scholars view the notion of adventure similarly despite significant similarities among their definitions. As early as 1938 Mead regarded adventure as an “aesthetic experience”, suggesting that adventure is a sensorial and perhaps even appealing endeavor. Simmel (1971: 187) remarked that “the most general form of adventure [is the] dropping out of the continuity of life”. Simmel contends that adventures include a dialogue and constant comparison of certain mental images and perceptions. For him, the more “adventurous an adventure […] the more dreamlike it becomes in our memory” (Simmel 1971: 188). However, not all researchers associate adventure with having dreamlike or aesthetic qualities, but rather attempt to define it based on what it is not. For example, Price (1978) claimed that we cannot have “adventure by numbers” and that any planned outdoor activity cannot be called an adventure (Price 1978) whereas Priest (1992) states that “to qualify as an adventure […] the outcome must be uncertain”. In a similar vein, McArthur states that adventure comprises “freedom of choice: intrinsic rewards; and an element of uncertainty, for instance when the experience outcome is uncertain, or its risks are unpredictable” (McArthur 1989: 3). Addison claims that adventure means “launching into the unknown with the expectation that it could turn out to be an ordeal” (1999: 417). And according to Smith and Jenner (1999: 44), “the key distinguishing feature of an adventure holiday is that it must have a quality of exploration or of an expedition about it – for the entire length of the trip, not just for one or two days”. In an attempt to capture adventure in its entirety, Swarbrooke et al. (2003: 9) list core characteristics of adventure, which encompasses the following:

- uncertain outcomes
- danger and risk
- challenge
- anticipated rewards
- novelty
- stimulation and excitement
- escapism and separation
• exploration and discovery
• absorption and focus
• contrasting emotions.

While some of these qualities overlap and are even interrelated, these authors assert that an adventure cannot be characterized if it encompasses only one of these traits, but if all are present they “believe an adventure is more or less guaranteed” (2003: 9). In Mortlock’s book entitled *The Alternative Adventure*, he states:

To adventure in the natural environment is consciously to take a challenge that will demand the best of our capabilities – physically, mentally and emotionally. It is a state of mind that will initially accept unpleasant feelings of fear, uncertainty and discomfort, and the need for luck, because we instinctively know that, if we are successful, these will be counterbalanced by opposite feelings of exhilaration and joy. This journey with a degree of uncertainty in the ‘University of Wilderness’ may be of any length in terms of distance or time: in any dimension – above, on or below ground or water. It may be climbing up a ten-foot slab covered with large holds or the biggest and steepest rock face in the world. It may be canoeing down the easiest or hardest rapid in the world, or the shortest or longest river. It may be sailing on lake or across an ocean. In all cases, you, the person in the situation is being challenged to the best of your abilities. If you have given of your genuine best, and either overcome the challenge or retreated with dignity through skill and experience rather than luck alone, then you have had one of the greatest experiences of your life. You have had a ‘peak experience’ with feelings almost indescribable and beyond those common to normal routine living. Ultimately life is about feelings, those that are concerned with the joy of living, rather than anxieties of modern existence. (1984/2000: 19)

Many of the characteristics listed by Swarebrooke et al. can be found within Mortlock’s passage as well. These include challenges, risks, uncertainty, excitement, contrasting emotions, discovery and rewards. But ultimately, an adventure is an extremely subjective experience.
Taking part in an alpine marathon, for example, in which the height elevation raises to 2000 meters might be considered an adventure for any novice marathoner whose aim is simply to complete their first alpine race regardless of their time. But the same competition might not be regarded as an adventure at all for the avid, experienced marathoner who is looking for a new personal best. Despite the list of characteristics outlined above, the same authors later state that:

adventure is a personal construct, based more on individual mental and emotional perceptions than physical capacities. Like beauty, which is in the eye of the beholder, adventure is in the mind and heart of the individual. (Swarebrooke et al. 2003: 14)

Because of its subjective nature, the meaning of adventure is ultimately left to the individual to define and within a capitalist economic system, becomes a prime site of commodification, where emotions, but perhaps more importantly, experiences have an economic value, which when sold, bought and carried out also gain symbolic value and are imbued with high social, cultural and network capital.

The field of adventure tourism has and continues to be understudied as an independent academic field since it has too often been studied as an extension of outdoor recreation (Weber 2001; Buckely 2006; McKay 2014). The difficulty in distinguishing this field in its own right is that it brings together travel, sport and outdoor recreation (Beedie and Hudson 2003). The rise in adventure tourism experienced in the late 1970s and early 1980s was due to the fact that outdoor recreation became commercialized. According to Buckley (2006) the definition of adventure tourism is extremely blurred since the boundaries of the field are not well defined, however, activities falling under the rubric of adventure tourism are. Furthermore, the difficulty in defining the field is that it overlaps with other sectors such as outdoor recreation, outdoor education, leisure studies and protected area visitor management (Buckley 2006: 3).
1.6.1 Adventure Travel and Adventure Tourism

According to Millington et al. (2001: 67) adventure travel is a: 

leisure activity that takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness destination. It tends to be associated with high levels of activity by the participant, most of it outdoors. Adventure travellers expect to experience various levels of risk, excitement and tranquility, and be personally tested. In particular they are explorers of unspoilt, exotic parts of the planet and also seek personal challenges.

Characteristics of adventure travel are indeed different to those characterized by adventure tourism in the following two definitions:

Adventure tourism is “characterized by its ability to provide the tourist with relatively high levels of sensory stimulation, usually achieved by including physical challenging experiential components with the (typically short) tourist experience. (Muller and Cleaver 2000: 156)

Adventure tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interactions of adventure touristic activities with the natural environment away from the participant’s usual place of residence area and containing elements of risk in which the outcome is influenced by the participation, setting, and organizer of the tourist’s experience. (Sung et al. 1996: 57)

While one of the defining factors of adventure travel is the actual experience of travel itself, this does not hold true for adventure tourism. Individuals engaging in adventure tourism do not necessarily have to travel to exotic or remote places in order to experience an actual adventure. Moreover, engaging in an adventure tourism activity may not take much time, however, this factor is also one that is debatable based on the kind of adventure activity being discussed. For Hudson, adventure tourism “encompasses several major ideas” (2003: 208). The first one of these involves the practical engagement of the tourist. In other words, physical involvement and effort is required from the tourist’s
perspective, which inevitably leads to the tourist having an embodied experience. The second idea is that adventure tourism is a business enterprise where “competition characterizes the market and big companies have the tendency to dominate” (2003: 209). Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2004: 857) state that adventure tourism “is often described in terms of its motivation, probably because it is so difficult to grasp why people would risk their lives to climb the north face of a mountain or throw themselves off a bridge with a rope tied to their feet”. But it is precisely these two very different kinds of adventure activities, mountaineering and bungee jumping that do not fall into the same type of adventure category, leaving the distinctions blurred once again. Mountaineering may, but not always, require that the individual posses a certain amount of climbing experience and mountaineering skills, although tourism and mountaineering have said to be “merging” (cf. Beedie and Hudson 2003; Mackenzie and Kerr 2012 for a thorough discussion). Within the context of mountaineering, individuals might be expected to handle certain equipment on their own without the assistance of a guide necessarily. A person willing to bungee jump, on the other hand, does not need any previous experience or knowledge of how bungee equipment functions let alone how to operate the actual equipment bungee masters employ. As a result, the different types of activities that fall under the umbrella term of adventure tourism activities have been distinguished as “broad” and “narrow” (Rubens 1999), “high” and “low” (Addison 1999), “hard” and “soft” (Buckley 2006; Hill 1995; Muller and Cleaver 2000; Swarbrooke et al. 2003) and “nature-based” (Buckley 2006, 2012; McKay 2014).

Other researchers talk about these different types of activities by making a distinction between “real” and “apparent” or “perceived” risk (Cater 2006; Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989; Fletcher 2009; Holyfield 1999; Mortlock 1983; Priest 1999). But even the distinctions between “hard” and “soft” activities are not always clear-cut. Hill states that, “soft adventurers usually take part in activities with a perceived risk but low levels of real risk requiring minimal commitment and beginning skills” (1995: 147). Swarbrooke et al. (2003: 63) refer to these types of adventures as “safe” activities for tourists that do not require prior experience. In comparison, “hard adventurers thrive when exposed to activities with
high levels of risk, requiring intense commitment and advanced skills” (Hill 1995: 147), which means that hard adventures or activities are both mentally and physically challenging and “demand a lot of previous experience and high levels of competence” (Swarbrooke et al. 2003: 64). Moreover, individuals engaging in hard adventure activities “procure their ‘adrenaline rush’ from taking risks which can to some extent be controlled based on their experience” (ibid.).

Table 1.1 consists of different types of adventure activities and their categorization as either “soft” or “hard”. On the left-hand side of table are activities listed as “soft” adventures which are considered to be those that are relatively “safe” requiring little to no previous experience, expertise or skills. The right-hand column lists activities that are regarded as “hard” adventure in which certain skills, experience and even necessary qualifications are required in order to carry them out, i.e., scuba diving. What is revealing about this table, however, are the activities listed as well as those that are not listed, for example, jet-boating (Cater 2006), paragliding, hang-gliding, skydiving (Celsi et al. 1993), “parachuting” (Carnicelli-Filho et al. 2010) and bungee jumping (McKay 2014).

While activities like paragliding, hang-gliding and skydiving might be categorized into the rubric of a “hard adventure”, it would only qualify as such if the individual were carrying out this type of activity on their own. Paragliding, for instance, is considered to be an activity and sport that can be both mentally and physically demanding for solo pilots especially if they engage in cross-country flying, competitions or acrobatics (see https://www.redbull.com for more information). Trained pilots not only need to attend flight school in order to become

| Soft adventure       | Hard adventure                          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Camping              | White-water rafting/kayaking            |
| Hiking on gradually changing terrain | Snorkeling/scuba diving                 |
| Bicycle touring      | Off-road biking/mountain biking         |
| Bird/animal watching | Backpacking across rugged terrain        |
| Horse riding         | Rock/mountain climbing                  |
| Canoeing             | Spelunking/cave exploring               |

Table 1.1 Soft and hard adventure activities by US residents (Adapted from Muller and Cleaver 2000)
an official licensed pilot, but once they are licensed, they must be able to independently “read” the wind and become weather experts to know about safe flying conditions as well as local take-off and landing procedures, rules and etiquette. In contrast, a tourist interested in doing a tandem commercial paragliding flight, does not require the know-how of their pilot for a successful flight to take place. The same is true for other activities labeled “hard”, such as white-water rafting (Holyfield 1999; Fletcher 2010).

Within the context of commercial white-water rafting expeditions, Holyfield (1999) refers to these adventures as “manufactured” thus stripping commercial adventure trips of authentic adventure on one hand by illustrating how adventure companies are able to transform “paralyzing states of fear and anxiousness” for novice rafters into sensations of fun and excitement by adhering to organizational scripts and elements of humor (1999: 6). She claims that “real adventures are said to be found in those ‘primordial arenas’ (Lyman and Scott 1989: 53) and real adventure seekers would disdain any organization that attempts to harness or frame the experience” (1999: 25). Furthermore, she asserts that, “the commercial experience is held prisoner by rationalization. It can only be artificial as it becomes an object of commodification. It is the consumption that is said to be genuine, becoming an end in itself” (1999: 26).

Nearly a decade ago, Fletcher (2010) discusses the paradox that exists within the adventure tourism industry, which simultaneously sells both “risk” and “safety”. The commodification and marketing strategies of adventure companies present their activities as being both risky and safe, which in many ways is a contradiction in itself, yet both must be present in order to become appealing for the prospective adventure consumer. This paradox is what Fletcher refers to as the “public secret” in which both providers and clients are aware that what is being sold is not actually that risky for anybody since in reality neither client nor adventure provider would want to risk individuals’ safety or worse yet, their own lives. Yet, specific marketing strategies are employed to appeal to clients by promoting this so-called “perceived” risk involved in the activity, which from the start is considered safe and controlled by providers.
In Fig. 1.1 we see how according to Beedie, the experience of adventure is commodified through the deployment of different outlets, technologies, modes and individuals where both interactional and ideological processes are at work. For Beedie (2003: 208), adventure companies offering activities “tread a careful line between selling adventure as an activity and delivering adventure as an experience”. This is done through the management role of guides and experts who are highly skilled and trained individuals and capable of delivering a fun and safe experience (by means of a service and product) to the client.
Secondly, the use of mobile, multimodal resources and advertising materials such as brochures, guidebooks and websites are used to sell these activities semiotically through visual and linguistic tropes and layering. In fact, these are precisely the sites where different communicative dimensions come to the fore that combine imagery and language to commodify identities, place, emotions and experience. Finally, technological innovation in relation to access and the ongoing redefinition of risk is done through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, where individuals can upload and display their experiences to be widely circulated, where risk appears to not only be diminished but in most cases, erased completely due to the individual safely completing the “high risk” adventure activity and having pictures and videos to prove it.

The complex combination of all of these processes contributes to our understanding of the “intensely semiotic industry that is tourism” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2014: 460). Indeed, the sociocultural, economic, linguistic, multimodal and technological processes described above provide ways in which individuals are sold emotions and experiences through a very carefully scripted discourse with a guaranteed outcome of redefining themselves not only as adventure seekers, but accomplished adventurers, where their identities are reevaluated and reassessed and imbued with considerable symbolic, cultural and social capital as a result of this physical, embodied and performative act.

1.7 Outline of Book

This book is a bit different from other monographs that investigate discourse, the highly semiotized industry of tourism and the performances of place. While the chapters that follow may be read separately depending on readers’ interests, they are meant to be read as a whole in order to guide the reader from contemporary and historical discussions of mobility, travel and adventure tourism and trace the exploration of both Interlaken, Switzerland and Queenstown, New Zealand as places of visual consumption to places of exploitation and play where
adventures are commodified, sold, bought and performed. In analyzing places of play and the circulating discourses of tourists, tourist operators and locals, it is also essential for readers to understand the complex processes and networks that exist and work in tandem in order for tourist hubs to remain competitive within the global market economy. This means looking into the ways that places are discussed and marketed along with how specific products and experiences are semiotically sold. On the other hand, it is not only tourists that make or perform place by purchasing products, souvenirs or experiences, but how they are largely sustained by an international and often mobile and precarious workforce. In these ways, this book attempts to tell a story about how places of play have been established and continue to be at the forefront within the adventure tourism industry that is driven by the global new economy and the movement of various resources, people, ideas and capital.

Chapter 2 traces the different historical developments of Interlaken, Switzerland and Queenstown, New Zealand in order to situate the context of the study and understand how places have been made and are constantly evolving. It begins by discussing Queenstown’s link to gold and trailblazers in the 1800s (McLeod 2007: 21) and Interlaken’s history as a health resort dating as far back as the seventeenth century. Indeed, both places have benefitted from the topographical views and scenic landscapes due to the corporeal mobility in the mid and late nineteenth century. It was precisely at that time in history that the separation of the senses also developed and the physical environment “came to be understood as scenery, views, perceptual sensation and romanticised” (Urry 2000: 83). This was also reflected in the growth of “scenic tourism” and fixed imagery, which was aided by the invention of the photograph in 1839 (Adler 1989). As a result, Interlaken and Queenstown (although later) became places ideal for visual consumption and were also promoted as such. The chapter then goes on to explain the establishment of both towns as tourist meccas, which later became sites of play as a result of the commercialization of the adventure industry in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The chapter ends with contemporary figures and statistics regarding global flows of tourists and estimated economic profit based on visitor expenditure and future predictions of both towns.
Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach taken in this study, which is one of a multi-methodological transnational global ethnography. It is in this chapter that I systematically explain what doing a mobile and global ethnography entails as well as outlining other mobile methods regarding data collection that were both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. These include, for example, observing people’s movements, participating in patterns of movements, virtual mobility through websites, capturing atmosphere, investigating real places and examining conversations from individuals involved in diverse areas of the adventure tourism industry. Afterwards, I discuss the notion of lifestyle as well as outline the different social categories and theoretical distinctions made, which pertain to participants of this study that include backpackers, tourists, travelers, locals, lifestyle residents and lifestyle migrants. The chapter ends with an explanation about the theoretical distinctions between lifestyle migration and lifestyle mobilities, of which the latter is taken up in this study.

Chapter 4 analyzes labor regulation and immigration policies within both New Zealand and Switzerland more generally before closely examining Queenstown as a specific case study. In Queenstown, recent immigration policies have been adjusted on a national level in order to meet local and regional labor shortages. This chapter looks into the intersecting political, economic and social processes and their ensuing consequences that are tied to market expansion and flexibilization, two key processes that drive the global economy. It is argued that Queenstown is not only a hypermobile place due to large tourist flows, but also due to the very transient transnational migrant workforce the town requires in order to meet growing tourist numbers and remain competitive within the global market. My data reveals that the transiency of migrant workers has dire social consequences for locals in the town with regard to building a community, maintaining social networks and having any real sense of belonging. From the perspective of the migrant workforce, it appears that Queenstown employers are indeed capitalizing on the town’s reputation with a large supply of an unskilled migrant workforce, who are often young, inexperienced and financially exploited. At the same time, however, some individuals express their desire to remain in Queenstown precisely because of the lifestyle it has
to offer, where leisure time and activities are valued more than socio-economic status and precisely at the boundaries where work and play appear to be disintegrating.

Chapter 5 analyzes how adventure is commodified through place, spectacle and embodied action. It provides a case study of the performance of place and tourist performativity through bungee jumping, considered (and promoted) as the iconic adventure activity within Queenstown. I analyze different data sets both on and offline pertaining to bungee jumping, which include websites, posters and individuals’ discourse before and after their bungee jumping experiences. A multi-modal methodological approach is taken in order to exemplify how bungee jumping, an activity that requires absolutely no skill or technique on the part of the consumer is sold and performed through the constant interplay of perceived and controlled risk in integrated texts where the boundaries of language and images break down. Another section of this chapter analyzes specific linguistic/discourse features which include parallelism and boosting and their specific functions in individuals’ discourse to exemplify the ways in which emotions are co-constructed, learned and enacted and how “conquering” the bungee jump becomes a rite of passage, where individuals’ social identities are reconfigured and reassessed whereby their social statuses are imbued with significant social and cultural capital.

Chapter 6 concludes with not necessarily providing answers, but outlines the salient issues from this study that probes questions about future developments within the “sociolinguistics of tourism”, specifically as they pertain to mobility, place and the performative embodiment of different social actors including tourists, locals, and lifestyle mobility residents in adventure playgrounds globally. It is also within this chapter that I revisit the methodological challenges of being a female ethnographic researcher in a male-dominated industry and argue that in addition to providing students with sociolinguistic toolkits, we also need to be acutely aware and realistic with our students about engaging in this kind of fieldwork, where gender bias and discrimination largely exist.

Chapter 7, entitled, “Advice: what to bear in mind if you decide on an ethnographic study of your own” is a “how-to guide” written
specifically for students interested in carrying out global ethnographic projects. The chapter begins with a section entitled “gender matters” and discusses practical ways in which individuals can deal with gender inequity, hegemonic masculinity and sexist treatment in domains that are considered largely male-dominated, such as the adventure tourism industry. The chapter continues by outlining theoretical, methodological and practical approaches to ethnographic work and considers research questions and time frames, data collection procedures and informed consent. It thoroughly discusses the importance of participant observation, conversations with participants (or interviews), writing up field notes, analyzing cultural artifacts and engaging with “linguistic gratuity”. Experiences from my own ten-year ethnographic journey are weaved in throughout the chapter in order to provide an accessible text to students with the aim of illustrating how things can be done rather than presenting a post hoc account. The chapter ends with a list of useful references and supplementary reading for students interested in doing ethnography.

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