

## Social Representations of Tourist Selfies: New Challenges for Sustainable Tourism

*John Pearce & Gianna Moscardo*

*James Cook University, Australia, [john.pearce@my.jcu.edu.au](mailto:john.pearce@my.jcu.edu.au)*

*James Cook University, Australia, [gianna.moscardo@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gianna.moscardo@jcu.edu.au)*

**Key words:** selfies, social representations, tourist behaviour, site management, sustainable tourism

### Abstract

A number of recent incidents have focused media attention on the phenomenon of tourist selfies, described their negative consequences for tourist destinations and identified a number of challenges for tourist site managers. This paper reports on an analysis of the social representation of tourist selfies in news media, and a review of emerging evidence about selfies from academic research. The aim was to develop a better understanding of this phenomenon to suggest ways that tourist site managers can balance the needs of the tourists taking the selfies with the demands of protecting the setting and others in it from negative tourism impacts. The paper seeks to contribute to more sustainable tourism through better site and attraction management.

### Introduction

The theme of balance is a common one in discussions of sustainability both in general and more specifically within tourism. Many definitions of sustainability and sustainable tourism include the idea of finding a balance between economic, environmental and social dimensions. Tourism planners and managers are encouraged to find a balance between the expectations of tourists, the needs of destination communities, and pressures to protect environments. The reality of finding and maintaining an appropriate balance between conflicting and competing pressures and expectations however, is very challenging. Ferreira and Harmse's (2014) review of tourism in Kruger National Park exemplifies these challenges with multiple management pressures. These include political expectations; that the park will provide benefits and economic opportunities for neighboring communities and that growth in tourism numbers will support both these local aspirations and provide funding for conservation; that tourists will have high quality experiences; and that all this will happen without significant negative environmental impacts. They conclude that the implementation of effective tourist behavior management strategies in these situations will depend on having a sound understanding of tourists. The present paper seeks to support tourist destination managers in finding an appropriate balance by improving our understanding of tourist behavior, especially that related to the taking of selfies. Kruger National Park also provides a good example of the issues related to this type of tourist photography with tourists getting into dangerous situations, and disturbing wildlife and other tourists in the pursuit of these photos (News24, 2014).

*"French tourists in nude Cambodia photo scandal to be deported"* (AFP, 2015). *"Tourists risk death to take the best holiday photo or 'selfie'"* (Weston, 2015). These headlines are typical of

recent media coverage of a number of incidents resulting from tourists taking selfies. The word selfie entered the Oxford dictionary in 2013 and has been defined as *“a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a Smartphone or webcam and shared via social media”*. Self-portraiture in photography is not a new practice and the addition of the technology and social media elements in this definition is important as it these that make the selfie worthy of new attention. A preliminary reading of media coverage of tourist selfies indicates that the practice has been associated with a range of negative outcomes for tourists and destination places, including damage to environments, wildlife harassment, causing cultural offence, and tourists placing themselves in danger. It appears that this practice may present significant challenges for the sustainable management of tourist sites. This media coverage also suggests that the practice is widespread and has grown exponentially. Despite the extent and growth of tourist selfies and potential negative impacts of the practice on tourists, residents and destination settings, tourist selfies have been given very little attention by tourism academics. This paper aims to explore this contemporary tourist behavior in order to guide further research and suggest directions for sustainable tourist site management.

The research reported in this paper is based on a qualitative analysis of the social representation of tourist selfies evident in a selection of contemporary media reports. The key elements of these everyday social representations are examined in light of evidence from the available academic discussions of selfies with the aim of suggesting management strategies for this type of tourist behavior. The paper begins with a critical review of the academic discussions of tourist photography and selfies in general before reporting on the analysis of the media reports. It then proposes a number of options to assist site managers to find a balance between meeting the needs of the tourists taking the selfies and limiting or avoiding the possible negative consequences for destination places.

## **Overview of Academic Discussions of Tourist Photography and Selfies**

This review will focus on photography by tourists rather than photography for tourists. The present paper is concerned with the photos that tourists take for their own personal use rather than the images produced by commercial entities seeking to present and sell a destination through guidebooks, advertisements, brochures and websites. Sontag (1977) linked the rise of popular photography to modern mass tourism describing both as key features of modernity and cameras as the identity badge of the tourist and introduced two key themes into the academic discussion of tourist photography –tourist photography as a form of place consumption and tourist photography as a negative process. In the first theme, she argued that tourists took photos as a way to structure their experiences and engage with the destination in ways beyond passive observation, to manage feelings of disorientation associated with unfamiliar places, to control the situation and exercise power over the objects and people being photographed, and to meet social obligations. In the second theme, she presented tourist photographers in a negative fashion suggesting that their behavior was often offensive and ignorant and interfered with the lives of both locals and other tourists. *“A photograph is not just the result of an encounter between an event and a photographer; picture-taking is an event in itself and one with ever more peremptory rights- to interfere with, to invade, or to ignore whatever is going on”* (Sontag, 1977, p. 11).

The idea of tourist photography as consuming places has dominated much of the subsequent academic discussion (Robinson, 2014). Urry (1990) also proposed that photography helped tourists to organize their experiences, gave them a sense of productivity and authenticated their presence in the tourist setting. Urry's work focused on what has been referred to as the circle of representation (Jenkins, 2003) or the hermeneutic circle (Urry and Larsen, 2011) in which tourists visit sites made famous in the images in tourist brochures, take and share photos replicating these images and reinforcing presented place myths. Most academic discussion has then focused on aspects of this consumption such as commodification and authenticity (Chalfen, 1987) and most research has concentrated on the content and symbolism of tourist photographs (Donaire, Camprubi & Gali, 2014). Of particular importance to the present discussion are more recent examinations that challenge the dominance of this hermeneutic circle. Donaire et al's (2014) study suggested that while tourists do often take photographs of destination icons, they also take many more photographs of other things with different types of tourist taking different types of photographs. Gillet, Schmitz and Mitas (2013) found that the process of tourist photography was a very social one with tourists often taking many more photos of each other than of things. Stylianou-Lambert (2012) concluded that, while the representations of tourist sites in brochures do influence the photos that tourists take, other factors such as the structural features of the setting which limit where photos can be taken, visual and social conventions that guide photography in general, and etiquette with respect to other tourist photographers are also important.

Stylianou-Lambert's (2012) discussion of etiquette in relation to others at a tourist sites suggests that while tourists can become quite absorbed in their own photography they are still conscious of not infringing on other tourists taking photos and that the decision process of what and how to photograph is a complex one. Scarles (2013) provides a detailed analysis of this issue examining the ethical decision-making that tourists engage in when deciding if, when and how to take photographs of locals. Scarles' (2013) concludes that tourists do recognize the ethical dimensions of these decisions and engage in much more complex decision making than is usually recognized by academic portrayals. They often lack relevant information on what is the appropriate way to behave, and that, even when tourists are aware that photographing locals may be problematic, their desire to experience the place often overrules other concerns.

The justifications given by tourists for their inappropriate photographs of locals in Scarles' (2013) study are similar to those that can found in many online discussion forums about nature and wildlife photography (cf. photography-on-the-net, 2014). These discussions also highlight the wide range of negative environmental impacts that can be associated with taking nature and wildlife photographs, including moving beyond management barriers into fragile areas causing erosion and damage to the flora, removal of vegetation, and disturbing wildlife. Although all these issues associated with tourist photography have been noted in general discussions of tourism management in natural areas (Lilieholm & Romney, 2000; Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005) and there is recognition of the centrality of photography to wildlife and nature based tourism there has been very little academic attention paid to this issue (Lemelin, 2006).

Arguably, this lack of academic attention to the management of tourist photography reflects the dominant focus in the tourism literature on the content rather than the process of this phenomenon. There has been however, a shift in emphasis in discussions of tourist photography

and Haldrup and Larsen (2003) are often cited as the earliest example of this change with their research focused on the processes of family photography. This research suggested a wider range of motivations for tourist photography including a need to understand the world, a desire to build personal narratives, and as a way to build and maintain important family relationships. These themes continue with extensions into considerations of the potential effects of digital photography on tourist practices (Larsen, 2014).

Larsen (2014) notes an important distinction between two waves of digital photography. In digital photography 1.0, the focus was on the use of digital cameras, which allowed for many more photographs to be taken and for immediate checking, deletion and re-taking of photographs. These changes mean less time spent on each individual image and more experimentation and play with the aesthetics and compositions of photographs (Urry & Larsen, 2011). According to Larsen (2014) digital photography 2.0 is about mobile and smart phone technologies associated with the uploading of images to various internet locations including social media, or what Picken (2014) calls the digital context. Descriptive statistics provided by Lo and colleagues (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011) suggest that many tourists are very active in this digital context.

Although to date selfies have had virtually no attention from tourism academics there are an emerging set of studies from other disciplines that can provide some insights into selfies. Johnson, Maiullo, Trembley, Werner and Woolsey (2014), for instance, found selfies could be used to learn important information and suggested that selfies can support story-telling and self-representation, and act as a tool for organizing information in a personally meaningful way consistent with Urry's (1990) claims about tourist photography in general. Selfies are also just one element of a larger and more complex phenomenon including social network sites (SNSs) and various forms of online interaction (McKnight, Tiidenberg, Barnum-Finke & Tekkobe, 2014). Although this online world is very complex it is not distinctly different to the offline social world (McKnight et al., 2014) with emerging evidence that there is as wide a range of behavior online as offline (Eftekhar, Fullwood & Morris, 2014). Researchers also highlight the importance of the online audience in shaping selfie behavior, noting that the most common motivations for taking and posting selfies is to engage in communication with significant others (Kwon & Kwon, 2015; Lee, 2009). They also highlight to build and maintain social relationships (Van House, 2011; Peek, 2014) and to share in communal or group bonding and identity building (Opel, 2014; Schwartz & Halegoua, 2014). There is also evidence that these online communities have and use complex sets of rules, norms and boundaries to guide and respond to selfies and act as a form of surveillance for selfie behavior (Thornton, 2014; Tiidenburg, 2015). Selfies are also seen as important to the development of individual identity and self-awareness. Schleser (2014) refers to this as a 'mobile autobiography' and argues that selfies help to both organize memory (Hogan, 2010) and explore our identity (Lee, 2009; Marwick & Boyd, 2010; Peek, 2014; Van House, 2011). According to Fausing (2014), Kwon and Kwon (2015), and Warfield (2014) the posting of selfies can offer an opportunity for self-reflection and to incorporate the responses of others in a quest to find our authentic selves, which is, in turn, necessary for positive social interactions and the development of concern for others.

Picken (2014) argues that these new technologies and new social communication practices are changing key elements of tourism and that existing theory on tourist photography is still driven

by analogue thinking that is unlikely to be helpful in this new environment. The discussions of selfies in other academic disciplines highlight several key features unique to this digital context. Firstly, in the discussions of selfies and learning the importance of the tags and text that accompany the posting of selfies and other photographs to SNSs is emphasized. This combination of images, both of self and of others, along with the text provides a narrative for an individual's life and is similar to the process of writing and keeping diaries and autobiographies (Cabillas, 2014). Secondly, there is recognition that the technologies that support selfies combine multiple dimensions of photography, for example, Swaminathan (2014) notes that a Smartphone is a means of production, with social media its means of distribution, and consumption occurring through a network of other smart devices. In this context selfies transcend simple photography and have the unique capability of being singlecast, narrowcast and broadcast at the same time, with individuals being simultaneously models, photographers and consumers. The third key feature is the political and empowerment dimensions of selfies. Fausing (2014), Pham (2015), Rich and Miah (2014), and Shipley (2015) describe a number of examples of selfies used to support political activism, provoke discussions around social issues and raise awareness of important challenges and worthy causes. Ehlin (2014) concludes that selfies are a sensory, communicative and political experience. The fourth feature is the importance of the online audience. There is clear evidence that people posting selfies are aware of their audience and adjust behavior in order to gain positive reaction and avoid censure (Arvidson & Axelson, 2014; Hogan, 2010; Marwick & Boyd, 2010). The final key difference between selfies and previous tourist photography is that the selfie process is very different in that it is immediate in terms of multiple dimensions. That is, selfies are physically close to the tourist, literally at the end of an arm, the image is immediately available for on-site checking and for presentation to the online audience, and they more closely connect the tourist to the setting.

The present paper seeks to examine in more detail the nature of tourist selfies with the aim of suggesting options for managers seeking to find the right balance between the value of selfies for tourists and the potentially harmful effects that can result from this practice.

### **Social Representations of Tourist Selfies in the Consensual Universe**

Social representations theory explains the development of understandings that allow communication and the development of shared identities and a common reality within social groups (Moscovici, 2001; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Halfacree defines social representations as *"mental constructs which guide us [and] define reality. The world is organized, understood and mediated through these basic cognitive units. Social representations consist of both concrete images and abstract concepts, organized around figurative nuclei which are a complex of images"* (1993, p. 29). Social representations emerge when individuals share their experiences and interact and these shared everyday explanations then take on a life of their own being repeated in media and popular culture (Philogene & Deaux, 2001).

While a wide variety of methods have been used to identify, describe and analyze social representations, qualitative approaches are more common (Flick & Foster, 2008). Therefore in order to explore social representations of tourist selfies this study examined news media reports and opinion pieces about tourist selfies using purposive sampling and thematic and discourse analysis. The first stage of the sampling involved a Google search using the phrase 'tourist selfie'

and then examination of all news articles from the first five pages of results generating 17 relevant articles which were subjected to a preliminary round of thematic coding. Examination of the codes indicated that saturation point had been reached with a very clear consensus within discussions of tourists' selfies. Consistent with sampling practice for qualitative research (Mirriam, 2009) the researchers chose to stop sampling at this point and focus on the analysis of these articles. The 17 articles came from Australian, British and American standard news outlets such as Fox News, the Guardian and the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), as well as magazines such as the Humanist and specialist news websites such as World News All Round. In most cases, the articles had also been published in print media and presented on television and in radio news segments.

These articles were then examined by two coders in an iterative process seeking firstly major themes and then discussions focused on explanations of actions linked to tourist selfies following the guidelines of Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008) and Grbich (2013). The first category of key themes related to the negative consequences of tourist selfies. Four major categories of negative consequences were identified – tourists putting themselves at risk to take selfies, negative environmental impacts resulting from tourist selfie behavior, cultural and social transgressions, and interference with others. Examples of common risky behaviors were posing in dangerous situations such as the edges of waterfalls and cliffs, and with wildlife such as bears. In some cases, tourists ignored warning signs and climbed over barriers such as fences and gates breaking management rules and causing damage such as erosion. Selfies with wildlife were also linked to actions such as animal feeding that in turn contributes to more frequent negative human-wildlife encounters in general, sometimes resulting in destruction of animals; entry into wildlife habitat causing distress and disruption to the animals; and increased incentives for the capture of animals for hire as photo props in tourist resort areas. As noted previously these types of action and impact have been linked to tourist photography prior to the adoption of mobile technologies and the selfie (Knight, 2009). The addition of posting photographs through social media to a global audience may provide an additional force encouraging risk taking behavior to match already posted images. This was evident in an article on crowds at Mission Peak Regional Preserve where selfies taken at the peak summit have become very popular on social media prompting tourists to replicate the posted images (Jones, 2014). This has resulted in a very sudden and rapid growth from fewer than 500 to more than 3000 visitors a day contributing to negative impacts on the physical environment, the tourists themselves and residents in the local area.

The second major theme was that of transgressions ranging from those that break laws and cause considerable cultural offence, such as taking nude photographs in temples in Cambodia, to those where the action is considered inappropriate but not illegal, such as the taking of smiling selfies at Auschwitz. Again it can be argued that tourists taking inappropriate photographs is neither new nor restricted to mobile technologies (Scarles, 2013), and again it seems that the nature of the audience for selfies and the process of taking a selfie may be encouraging more widespread and frequent transgressions. In the case of nude photographs in Cambodia temples, for example, multiple different incidents were reported suggesting a social media trend for this behavior. In the case of smiling selfies at Auschwitz, it could be argued that smiling is such a commonly repeated element of selfies that it may be an automatic rather than an intentional behavior (Reis, Wilson, Monestere, Bernstein, et al., 1990). The final set of negative

consequences linked to tourist selfies was related to interference. The most common of these was interference with other tourists especially when selfies were being taken using selfie sticks. There were also examples of tourists interfering with the actions of local residents by posing for selfies.

The second stage in the analysis focused on the explanations given for tourist selfies and evaluations made about this activity. Table 1 lists the headlines for the articles and an examination of these provides some insights into the key elements of the social representations revealed in this stage of analysis. There was considerable consensus that the taking of tourist selfies was a uniformly negative action and reflected the narcissism of the tourists taking them. These headlines reveal a strong negative view of the behavior, with only one commentator offering a positive alternative explanation and one suggesting that it might reflect current social conditions as well the personality of the individual tourists. Blackburn’s (2014) discussion of selfies, suggests that some consumers do require a constant stream of feedback from followers to feel appreciated and valued. The actual evidence is, however, mixed with some reports finding a link, albeit not always a strong one, between narcissism and the number of selfies posted to SNSs (Chan & Tsang, 2014; Fox & Rooney, 2015) and others finding no link between selfie behavior and narcissism or depression (Banjanin, Banjanin, Dimitrijevic & Pantic, 2015). It is important to remember that there is evidence that selfies serve a number of social rather than individual functions.

**Table 1: Headlines for Tourist Selfie Articles**

Article Headline	Reference
Sisters ‘arrested and kicked out of Cambodia after taking NAKED photos at sacred Buddhist temple’	Adams, 2015
French tourist in nude Cambodia photo scandal to be deported	AFP, 2015
Death tourism, Auschwitz selfies, and online souvenirs	Blackwood, 2014
Tourists taking selfies with dingoes blamed for attacks on Fraser Island.	Donaghey & Vonow, 2014
Places around the world that have banned selfies.	Fox News, 2015
What’s wrong with these selfies? Everything.	Ghert-Zand, 2013
Selfie sticks: Tourist convenience or purely narcissi-stick?	Harpaz, 2015
Crowds overrun Mission Peak in Fremont to shoot selfies.	Jones, 2014
Sacrilegious selfies: Is taking photos at “sacred” places inappropriate?	Myers, 2014
Campaign to stop ‘animal selfies’ shows that animal lovers are causing cruelty.	Right Tourism, nd
Countries around the world have started to ban selfies.	Ryan, 2015
The scourge of the selfie stick.	Tatz, 2015
Forest service bear selfies: Officials warn tourists to stop taking #Selfies with Bears, South Lake Tahoe could close down due to ‘bear selfies’.	Travelers Today, 2014
Tourists take selfies with ‘dead’ body during LOVE Park Ferguson protest.	Vadala, 2014
Tourists risk death to take the best holiday photo or ‘selfie’ at Purlingbrook Falls in Gold Coast Hinterland.	Weston, 2015
Photo stop: The ten most popular tourist spots for Selfies.	World News All Around, 2015
Chinese tourists snap selfies with dying dolphin.	Zimmerman, 2013

In some cases the articles depicted the behavior as not only narcissistic but also intentional and uncaring - *“tourists simply ignored the exhibit”* (a protest against the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson) – *or worse, mocked it”*. In others there is some recognition that the tourists may be unaware of the negative consequences of their behavior, but they are still treated as stupid - *“there is something curiously awry when people travel the world, visit exotic locations, and still find their own face more fascinating”*. Many writers also focused their critiques on young people,

suggesting that the behavior was exclusive to those aged less than 30 despite the accompanying images clearly including people of all ages. Although this tourist selfie social representation focuses on young people, selfies are actually taken by many different people as the technology has moved beyond early adopters to widespread use of SNSs and mobile technologies (Fausing, 2014; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Finally, many of the articles included the names of those taking these supposed negative selfies, engaging in a shaming rather than solving approach. For example, in discussing an incident where a teenager posted a smiling selfie in front of Auschwitz, most articles referred to the girl by name and did not hesitate to criticize at some length a teenager in a global news outlet. Recently concerns have been raised about the nature of such public shaming in the digital world (cf, Petley, 2013). As many authors attributed the negative consequences of tourist selfies to the narcissistic and/or foolish behavior of the tourists, it is not surprising that few offered solutions. Some did report the actions being taken by site managers. These included total bans on selfies, the development of selfie free areas, fines, and in some cases total closure of the site. Mostly though, these were only given limited coverage and generally presented as unlikely to be effective.

A number of authors in critical discourse have followed Derrida’s lead in examining not only what is included (present) in texts and discussions but also considering what is left out or absent (Howells, 1998). In the current study a number of absences are worthy of note. For example, most articles acknowledged that a critical element of the tourist selfie phenomenon was the posting of the images to various social media platforms but only one acknowledged that the social media audience might play a role in this behavior. The absence of the audience allowed the social representation to clearly attribute the behavior to the personality weaknesses of the individual tourist and avoid any serious consideration of positive aspects to the practice. Another unquestioned assumption in these discussions was that the single person tourist selfie was the dominant and/or only photograph taken. The available evidence, however, suggests that while numerically many selfies are taken and posted online, selfies of individuals make up less than a quarter of all posted images and even when combined with group selfies still only account for less than half of all posted images (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014; Selfiecity, nd). Additionally the possibility that a selfie was one image amongst many others was never acknowledged nor was any consideration given to the text or tags that typically accompany the posting of images online. The final notable absence was any recognition that many of the negative actions reported have been associated with tourist photography prior to the adoption of mobile technology or social media.

**Table 2: Summarizing and Contrasting Different Views on Tourist Selfies**

Social Representation Claims	Evidence
Selfies are a new phenomenon associated with new negative impacts	Self-portraits at tourist sites are not new and neither are the potential negative impacts of tourists seeking a particular photographic image
Selfies are the dominant/only type of photograph taken and are considered in isolation from their tags	Selfies (individual & group) are one of many different types of photographs taken and posted and mostly are posted with accompanying text
Selfies are motivated by narcissism and vanity	Selfies are motivated by a desire to connect to the place and to significant others
There is no value in a selfie beyond self-presentation	Selfies can be used in many ways including in learning, awareness raising and political action
Selfies are an individual pursuit	Selfies are one element of complex social interactions and social processes



Selfies are just taken by young people	Selfies are taken and posted by a wide variety of people
Tourists taking selfies don't care about anyone or anything else	Tourists taking selfies are aware of others but may not be aware of the actual and potential negative consequences of their behavior and may find it difficult to access information on appropriate behaviors
Tourists taking selfies are not interested in the place	Tourists take selfies as part of developing stories about the place and how they experience it
The intended audience for selfies is not important	The intended audience for selfies is critical

Table 2 summarizes the key elements of the popular media social representation of tourist selfies and contrasts these with the available evidence from research and academic analysis into tourist photography beyond selfies and selfies beyond tourism. As can be seen there are considerable differences between these two different views. This social representation of tourist selfies could be described as a moral panic and public discussions of selfies and online activities in general have been classified in this way in the sociology literature and linked to government policies and public education strategies designed to mitigate the negative impacts (Gabriel, 2014). In a similar fashion, in the present case it appears that tourist site managers faced with no systematic critical research into the beliefs, motivations and decisions related to this tourist behavior have begun to develop strategies based on the prevailing social representation. If, as Warfield (2014) notes, responses based on these types of public and media discourse are often ineffective, then it is important to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon.

### Finding Balance for Sustainable Tourist Site Management

It is clear that tourist selfies are likely to become more rather than less common over time and that the current patterns of behavior linked to them can and do have negative consequences for the tourists themselves, the people around them, and for the physical and cultural dimensions of the site or attraction. Arguably the existing tourism academic literature on photography in general has shown little concern with implications for managing on-site behavior with both Chalfen (1987) and Scarles (2013) noting a lack of guidance for tourists about appropriate photographic behaviors. Tourist behavior management strategies based on the social representation focus on banning the behavior and shaming the individual tourists and are an example of what Picken (2014) calls analogue thinking, which misinterprets the motivations for, and benefits of, the behavior and focuses attention on blaming the individual for their bad behavior. Such a process deflects attention from analysis of the social context and organizational structures that contribute to the practice (Arvidson & Axelson, 2014) and thus avoids challenging prevailing assumptions (Gabriel, 2014). Shifting to management based on the available evidence emerging from research suggests quite different approaches. It is suggested that management strategies be driven by three core principles:

- that selfies are about making connections between tourists and places, tourists and audiences and the audience and the place;
- that selfies are fundamentally social rather than selfish; and
- that selfies are part of larger complex social systems not just simple swift acts of isolated individuals.

It is possible using these principles, to suggest three main types of management strategy. Although it could be claimed that the first two types of strategy are already used in some

settings, it is argued here that their use is limited both in terms of the number of locations that employ them and, when they are used, how extensive this use is. The first and simplest strategy is to provide information and guidance to tourists on how to take safe and appropriate photographs (including selfies) in the various tourist settings. Information on where and how photographs can be taken and what subjects and objects are appropriate and inappropriate for images should be provided in different format and locations for both tourists and intermediaries such as guides and other staff in tourism businesses. At this simplest level, this type of information sets the boundaries for the behavior and should be focused on avoiding the physical, cultural and legal consequences of inappropriate and unsafe photographic behaviors.

The second type of strategy involves a more proactive approach to information and guidance with more attention paid to providing better quality and more extensive place interpretation. The use of heritage interpretation to tell the stories of the destination places and people can assist in managing tourist photography in two ways. Firstly, it can support a better understanding and appreciation for the destination and this can encourage tourists to engage in more appropriate photographic practices. Secondly, and more directly linked to the management of tourist selfies, interpretation can provide place specific stories for tourist to retell through the photographs and text they post online, that can be used to substitute for the ones that they have to develop themselves. This interpretation strategy can be supplemented with a third type of action which involves the provision of physical support for tourist photographs such as the selection and development of specific locations for taking photographs/selfies and the provision of props and backdrops which can engage tourists in the place stories.

The previous strategies are already in place to some extent in many tourist locations and represent an extension of existing practices, which focus on the individual tourists and their on-site behaviors. The research evidence summarized in Table 2 suggests a set of more novel strategies linked to the audiences for selfies and other online interactions with a focus on influencing behavior before and after tourists visit the site. The first of these strategies involves developing and maintaining an online presence for the tourist site management organization and using this to present and model appropriate photographic behavior and explain to online communities and audiences what is desirable tourist photographic behavior at the site. This action seeks to limit or avoid audience pressures on tourists to take selfies that may be dangerous or damaging. It is possible to extend this into a second audience-based strategy by seeing selfies as tool that can be used to raise awareness about negative impacts and challenging issues associated with site. Finally, it is suggested that managers seek to work with online intermediaries to establish guidelines about the posting of inappropriate tourist selfies and other images.

## **Conclusions**

The evidence emerging from tourist selfie research challenges the simplistic view that selfies are a result of narcissism and offers instead insights into a communicative and transformative practice reflecting various social connections and self-expression needs of individuals. Critical examination of the social representation of tourist selfies in the consensual universe was contrasted with the available research that provided a range of directions for the management of this aspect of tourist behavior and through that supports more sustainable tourism at the destination level. Academic research into tourist selfies is, however, incomplete and further areas

need to be investigated. In particular, more research into the audience for tourist selfies may improve our understanding of this phenomenon. It can also be suggested that more detailed research focused on tourist selfies is needed to understand exactly how they fit into the larger picture of tourist's online communication.

## References

- Adams, S. (2015). Sisters 'arrested and kicked out of Cambodia after taking NAKED photos at sacred Buddhist temple'. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/sisters-arrested-kicked-out-cambodia-5124935> (accessed February 9, 2015).
- AFP (2015). French tourist in nude Cambodia photo scandal to be deported. Available at <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/french-tourists-in-nude-cambodia-photo-scandal-to-be-deported/story-e6frfq80-1227204625608> (accessed February 3, 2015).
- Alexander, M. (2015). Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives (Book Review). *Curator*, 58(2), 223-227.
- Andriotis, K., & Vaughan, R. (2003). Urban residents' attitudes toward tourism development: The case of Crete. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42, 172-185.
- Arvidson, M., & Axelsson, J. (2014). The concept of self-loyalty. Paper presented at 7<sup>th</sup> Nordic Work-Life Conference. [http://nwlc2014.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Arvidsson\\_Axelsson.pdf](http://nwlc2014.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Arvidsson_Axelsson.pdf) (accessed December 22, 2014).
- Banjanin, N., Banjanin, N., Dimitrijevic, I., & Pantic, I. (2015). Relationship between internet use and depression: Focus on physiological mood oscillations, social networking and online addictive behavior. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 308-312.
- Blackburn, S. (2014). *Mirror, mirror: The uses and abuses of self-love*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Blackwood, G. (2014). Death tourism, Auschwitz selfies, and online souvenirs. <http://theconversation.com/death-tourism-auschwitz-selfies-and-online-souvenirs-29635> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Cabillas, M. (2014). Memories under construction: Writing, narratives and dialogues. *Culture & Psychology*, 20(3), 308-329.
- Chalfen, R. (1987). *Snapshot Versions of Life*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University.
- Chan, L. S., & Tsang, H. W. E. (2014). "Hey, Look at My Body!": An Exploratory Study of Body Display on Facebook among Hong Kong Young Adults. *International Journal of Interactive Communication Systems and Technologies*, 4(1), 31-46.
- Donaghey, K. & Vonow, B. (2014). Tourists taking selfies with dingoes blamed for attacks on Fraser Island. <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/tourists-taking-selfies-with-dingoes-blamed-for-attacks-on-fraser-island/story-fnihsrf2-1227023510271> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Donaire, J. A., Camprubí, R., & Galí, N. (2014). Tourist clusters from Flickr travel photography. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 11, 26-33.
- Eftekhar, A., Fullwood, C., & Morris, N. (2014). Capturing personality from Facebook photos and photo-related activities: How much exposure do you need? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, 162-170.
- Ehlin, L. (2014). The subversive selfie: Redefining the mediated subject. *Clothing Cultures*, 2 (1), 73-89.

- Fausing, B. (2014). Selfies, Healthies, Usies, Felfies: Selfies ændrer verden. Kommunikationsforum. 11. <http://forskningsbasen.deff.dk/Share.external?sp=S9203752f-d7fb-49fe-b1bc-4dca3ae3a5aa&sp=Sku>(accessed February 22, 2015).
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2008). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80-92.
- Ferreira, S., & Harmse, A. (2014). Kruger National Park: tourism development and issues around the management of large numbers of tourists. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 13(1), 16-34.
- Flick, U. & Foster, J. (2008). Social representations. In C. Willig and W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 195-214). London: Sage.
- Fox, J., & Rooney, M. C. (2015). The Dark Triad and trait self-objectification as predictors of men's use and self-presentation behaviors on social networking sites. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 76, 161-165.
- Fox News (2015). Places around the world that have banned selfies. <http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2015/01/29/cities-and-countries-that-ban-or-at-least-frown-upon-taking-selfies/> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Gabriel, F. (2014). Sexting, selfies and self-harm: young people, social media and the performance of self-development. *Media International Australia*, 151, 104-112. <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=353961738626632;res=IELLCC> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Ghert-Zand, R. (2013). What's wrong with these selfies? Everything. <http://forward.com/opinion/188390/whats-wrong-with-these-selfies-everything/> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Gillet, S., Schmitz, P., & Mitas, O. (2013). The Snap-Happy Tourist: The Effects of Photographing Behavior on Tourists' Happiness. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, DOI: 1096348013491606.
- Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*. London: Sage.
- Halfacree, K. (1993). Locality and social representation: Space, discourse and alternative definitions of the rural. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 9(1), 23-37.
- Haldrup, M., & Larsen, J. (2003). The family gaze. *Tourist Studies*, 3(1), 23-46.
- Harpaz, B.J. (2015). Selfie sticks: Tourist convenience or purely narcissi-stick? <https://www.yahoo.com/tech/s/selfie-sticks-tourist-convenience-purely-narcissi-stick-165424230.html> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Hogan, B. (2010). The presentation of self in the age of social media: Distinguishing performances and exhibitions online. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30(7), 377-386.
- Howells, C. (1998). *Derrida: Deconstruction from phenomenology to ethics*. Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hu, Y., Manikonda, L., & Kambhampati, S. (2014). What we instagram: A first analysis of instagram photo content and user types. *Proceeding of the AAAI ICWSM Conference*. <http://149.169.27.83/instagram-icwsm.pdf> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Jenkins, O. (2003). Photography and travel brochures: the circle of representation. *Tourism Geographies*, 5(3), 305-328.
- Johnson, S. M., Maiullo, S., Trembley, E., Werner, C. L., & Woolsey, D. (2014). The Selfie as a Pedagogical Tool in a College Classroom. *College Teaching*, 62(4), 119-120.
- Jones, C. (2014). Crowds overrun Mission Peak in Fremont to shoot selfies. Available at <http://www.sfgate.com/outdoors/article/Crowds-overrun-Mission-Peak-in-Fremont-to->

- [shoot-5755479.php](#) (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-251.
- Knight, J. (2009). Making wildlife viewable: habituation and attraction. *Society & Animals*, 17(2), 167-184.
- Kwon, Y.J. & Kwon, K. (2015) Consuming the Objectified Self: The Quest for Authentic Self. *Asian Social Science*, 11 (2). <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/view/43541> (accessed January 21, 2015).
- Larsen, J. (2014). The (Im) mobile Life of Digital Photographs: The Case of Tourist Photography. In J. Larsen and M. Sandbye (Eds.), *Digital Snaps: The New Face of Photography*(pp. 25-46). London: I.B.Taurus.
- Lee, D. H. (2009). Mobile snapshots and private/public boundaries. *Knowledge, Technology & Policy*, 22(3), 161-171.
- Lemelin, R. H. (2006). The gawk, the glance, and the gaze: Ocular consumption and polar bear tourism in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(6), 516-534.
- Lilieholm, R. J.& Romney, L. R. (2000). Tourism, national parks and wildlife. In R.W. Butler and S.W. Boyd (Eds.), *Tourism and national parks: Issues and implications* (pp. 137-151). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lo, I. S., McKercher, B., Lo, A., Cheung, C., & Law, R. (2011). Tourism and online photography. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 725-731.
- Marwick, A. E. & Boyd, d. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, 13(1), 114-133.
- McKnight, J. C., Tiidenberg, K., Burnam-Fink, M., & Tekkobe, C. (2013). Navigating Boundaries and Taboos in the Digital Frontier. *Selected Papers of Internet Research*, 3. <http://spir.aoir.org/index.php/spir/article/view/892> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Moscovici, S. (2001). Why a theory of social representations? In K. Deaux & G. Philogene (Eds.), *Representations* (pp. 8–35). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Myers, J. (2014). Sacrilegious selfies: Is taking photos at “sacred” places inappropriate?<http://thehumanist.com/commentary/sacrilegious-selfies-is-taking-photos-at-sacred-places-inappropriate> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Newsome, D., Dowling, R. K., & Moore, S. A. (2005). *Wildlife tourism* (Vol. 24) Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- News24 (2014). SANParks on the hunt for illegal drone users in Kruger. <http://m.news24.com/Traveller/News/SANParks-on-the-hunt-for-illegal-drone-users-in-Kruger-20141231> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Opel, D. S. (2014). Self-representation in literary fandom: Women's leisure reader selfies as postfeminist performance. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 18. <http://journal.transformativeworks.com/index.php/twc/article/view/607> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Oxford Dictionary (2013). Definition of selfie. Available at <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/selfie> (accessed March 5, 2015).
- Peek, H. (2014). The Selfie in the Digital Age: From Social Media to Sexting. *Psychiatric Times*, 31(12), <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/cultural-psychiatry/selfie-digital-age-social-media-sexting#sthash.W75AfU8F.dpuf> (accessed March 5, 2015).
- Petley, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Media and Public Shaming: Drawing the Boundaries of Disclosure*. London:

- IB Tauris.
- Pham, M. H. T. (2015). "I Click and Post and Breathe, Waiting for Others to See What I See": On# FeministSelfies, Outfit Photos, and Networked Vanity. *Fashion Theory*, 19(2), 221-241.
- Philogene, G., & Deaux, K. (2001). Introduction. In K. Deaux and G. Philogene (Eds.), *Representations of the social: Bridging theoretical traditions* (pp. 1–7). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Photography-on-the-net (2014). What is your acceptable 'damage' to the environment to get a shot? <http://photography-on-the.net/forum/showthread.php?p=17419607> (accessed December 22, 2014).
- Picken, F. (2014). 'So much for snapshots': The material relations of tourists as cultural dupes. *Tourist Studies*, 14(3), 246-260.
- Reis, H. T., Wilson, I. M., Monestere, C., Bernstein, S., Clark, K., Seidl, E., ... & Radoane, K. (1990). What is smiling is beautiful and good. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 20(3), 259-267.
- Rich, E., & Miah, A. (2014). Understanding digital health as public pedagogy: A critical framework. *Societies*, 4(2), 296-315.
- Right Tourism (nd). Campaign to stop 'animal selfies' shows that animal lovers are causing cruelty. <http://right-tourism.com/2015/02/campaign-stop-animal-selfies-shows-animal-lovers-causing-cruelty/#sthash.X6ncNf73.dpbs> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Robinson, P. (2014). Mediating the tourist gaze: memory, emotion and choreography of the digital photograph. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 14(3), 177-196.
- Ryan, R. (2015). Countries around the world have started to ban selfies. <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-advice/countries-around-the-world-have-started-to-ban-selfies/story-e6frfqfr-1227194906210> (accessed January 25, 2015).
- Scarles, C. E. (2013). The Ethics of Tourist Photography. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 31(5), 897-917.
- Schleser, M. (2014). Connecting through mobile autobiographies: Self-reflexive mobile filmmaking, self-representation, and selfies. In M. Berry and M. Schleser (Eds.), *Mobile media making in an age of Smartphone's* (pp. 148-158). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schwartz, R., & Halegoua, G. R. (2014). The spatial self: Location-based identity performance on social media. *New Media & Society*, Doi: 1461444814531364.
- Selfiecity (nd). Our main findings. <http://selfiecity.net/#> (accessed January 21, 2015).
- Shiple, J. W. (2015). Selfie Love: Public Lives in an Era of Celebrity Pleasure, Violence, and Social Media. *American Anthropologist*. DOI: 10.1111/aman.12247.
- Sontag, S. (1977). *On photography*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- Stylianou-Lambert, T. (2012). Tourists with cameras: Reproducing or Producing? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(4), 1817-1838.
- Swaminathan, R. (2014). Self, Selfhood and a Selfie: The Anatomy of a Virtual Body and Digital Identity. [http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/swaminathan\\_webpaper.pdf](http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/swaminathan_webpaper.pdf) (accessed January 21, 2015).
- Tatz, S. (2015). The scourge of the selfie stick. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-02/tatz-the-scourge-of-the-selfie-stick/5997032> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Thornton, L. J. (2014). The Photo Is Live at Applifam: An Instagram Community Grapples With How Images Should Be Used. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 21(2), 72-82.
- Tiidenberg, K. (2015). Boundaries and conflict in a NSFW community on tumblr: The meanings and uses of selfies. *New Media & Society*, oi: 1461444814567984.
- Travelers Today (2014). Forest service bear selfies: Officials warn tourists to stop taking #Selfies

- with Bears, South Lake Tahoe could close down due to 'bear selfies'.  
<http://www.travelertoday.com/articles/13517/20141029/forest-service-bear-selfie-officials-warn-tourists-to-stop-taking-selfies-with-bears-south-lake-tahoe-could-close-down-due-to-bear-selfies.htm> (Accessed February 16, 2015).
- Urry, J. (1990). *The tourist gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.
- Urry, J., & Larsen, J. (2011). *The tourist gaze 3.0*. London: Sage.
- Vadala, N. (2014). Tourists take selfies with 'dead' body during LOVE Park Ferguson protest.  
<http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/trending/Tourists-take-selfies-with-dead-body-during-Love-Park-Ferguson-protest.html> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Van House, N. A. (2011). Personal photography, digital technologies and the uses of the visual. *Visual Studies*, 26(2), 125-134.
- Warfield, K. (2014). Making Selfies/Making Self: Digital Subjectivities in the Selfie.  
<http://kora.kpu.ca/facultypub/8/> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- Weilenmann, A., Hillman, T., & Jungselius, B. (2013). Instagram at the museum: communicating the museum experience through social photo sharing. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1843-1852).  
<http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2466243> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Weston, P. (2015). Tourists risk death to take the best holiday photo or 'selfie' at Purlingbrook Falls in Gold Coast Hinterland. Available at  
<http://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/gold-coast/tourists-risk-death-to-take-the-best-holiday-photo-or-selfie-at-purlingbrook-falls-in-gold-coast-hinterland/story-fnj94idh-1227198857608> (accessed February 16, 2015).
- World News All Around (2015). Photo stop: The ten most popular tourist spots for Selfies.  
<http://world.news-round.com/photo-stop-the-ten-most-popular-tourist-spots-for-selfies/> (accessed February 22, 2015).
- Zimmerman, N. (2013). Chinese tourists snap selfies with dying dolphin.  
<http://gawker.com/chinese-tourists-snap-selfies-with-dying-dolphin-514264840> (accessed February 16, 2015).