

Title: What's on Steve Buscemi's Stoop? Tracking Tourism off the Beaten Track

Author: Elisabeth Hogdahl¹ & Maria Månsson²

Affiliation: Lund University¹; Liverpool John Moores University²

Contact: elisabeth.hogdahl@ism.lu.se

Session Type: Presentation

Abstract:

Strategies to keep the tourist gaze are essential, and a wide range of tourist attractions are under constant development. Besides the traditional mix of heritage, shopping, and sports, fields like media, film, and books have an increasing impact on tourism strategies. "The tourist" is often seen as a "follower," someone who needs guiding and planned attractions. The tourism industry seems fixated with planning for the tourist, rather than acknowledging the creative and explorative side of tourism.

In contrast to this, tourism off the beaten track is of interest for many tourists, feeling the need to experience place in another way, searching for identity-making through the everyday, to experience something that is both ordinary and unique. It is a process of tactics rather than strategy. World cities like Berlin, London, and New York offer great opportunities to find a track of one's own, to puzzle pieces together and develop a personal relation, a personal view, and a personal story to bring home.

Tourism off the beaten track is the focus of the paper we want to present, but we also want to narrow the question down by relating the issue to the concept of creativity and tracking. To discover a city has to do with mapping, to create a personal and imaginative map. The city can be seen as a bricolage of different fragments that offers many different opportunities for the tourists to "put the pieces together." To create a personal map as a tourist has to do with making important choices, as every choice makes the city look different. What tools do you need, what triggers may tempt you to look for different areas, events, and people? From our point of view, tracking is essential in the process of making tourism off the beaten track. You have to find a starting point, something interesting to look for. By doing this, you will find new links, interesting events, and places to include in the puzzle. One of our important points is that the *tracking itself*, the process of wandering, finding clues, tracking, and searching, might be of much bigger importance than the actual "findings." Who do you become by tracking? How do you, by this activity, become a part of the city, by watching people on the street, the bricks in the walls you pass, and by the conviction that you are following a complete new track that no tourist has ever seen before?

We will discuss the importance of tracking by using an auto-ethnographic method in a trip to New York in 2015. We were tracking different locations known from popular culture, such as the stoop of the film actor Steve Buscemi, a bridge in Prospect Park, and eventually Kojak's eleventh precinct police station (which we stumbled over). By doing this, we will discuss the process of tracking off the beaten track, and what it might offer for the process of identity making and becoming a "tourist of confidence."