

Constructing the Tourist Destination. A socio-material Description

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Cover illustration:
A visual collage of the tourist destination of Zakopane. Authors own photos.

Except where otherwise noted, the included photos are taken by the author.

'Words are at best the tip of a material iceberg'
Law (2000:15)

CONSTRUCTING THE TOURIST DESTINATION
A SOCIO-MATERIAL DESCRIPTION

CARINA REN

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Chapter 1

From mapping to charting. An introduction to the tourist destination



When accessing the Internet on one of my very first searches for online descriptions of the Polish tourist destination of Zakopane, I came across the following:

'Zakopane [...] is a charming resort in the heart of the Tatra Mountains. It is called the Polish winter capital. There is a fairytale atmosphere here, with its "gingerbread" wooden cottages and many inhabitants who still wear national dress'¹.

Since I first came across this phrasing, I have used it in presentations and publications to introduce not only the town of Zakopane but also, more importantly, my approach to studying it as a tourist destination. The reason for using it once again in this opening chapter of my PhD thesis is hardly its originality or exclusivity. Only shortly after I first came across this description, initially retrieved from a website of a British travel organiser, I realised that almost identical texts were to be found on numerous other tourism related websites seeking to attract tourists to this mountainous area of Poland. It was virtually one which thrived and flourished on the Internet. Rather, my interest in this description of Zakopane emanates from wondering about how the place came to be described in this specific way. How has this exact description become one of the most prevalent online narratives of Zakopane as a tourist destination? Why was this version of the destination chosen rather than others praising Zakopane's stunning natural surroundings, its main street filled with well-known brands or its history as one of Socialist Poland's largest and most popular mass tourism destinations?

Two reasons can be given to explain why this description is so well suited to initially illustrate the undertakings to follow in this thesis. The first concerns the way local culture and cultural artefacts are presented as central to Zakopane and linked as intrinsic parts of the place. This is done by pointing to the local building style and national dress. The quote's romantic perception of culture posits the town as unique and exotic, related to times past and old-fashioned 'national' clothing styles. It implicitly ascribes the place with stable cultural properties, identifying it by a collection of objective, unchanging features. Hence, culture appears as something non-negotiable, simply inherent to, and naturally extracted from a locally bound culture². Considering the history of this town and its region, this emphasis on a local and national cultural distinction is hardly a surprise. Since the middle of the 19th century, Zakopane, located in the Podhale region in the Tatra Mountains near the Slovakian border, has been a centre for the unfolding of leisure activities such as hiking and skiing, and for general relaxation in the fresh mountain air. From early on, these activities were promoted by and subsequently aimed at the bourgeoisie from nearby Cracow or from Warsaw living out ideals of sound recreation in breathtaking, and what was conceived of as very Polish, settings of the Tatra

¹ <http://www.amberholidays.biz/apoland2.html>

² As will be further substantiated in the following chapters, this relativist understanding of culture underlies much research in cultural tourism by perceiving (and subsequently marketing) culture as something inherent and strictly related to a distinct local, regional or national culture.

Mountains. In this way, Zakopane and the Tatras became not only a focal point for bourgeois recreation, but also the centre for the unfolding of national romantic culture (Ekströmer 1991). In history books, the Tatras are narrated as a place of heroic conduct during time of war (Davies 1987). In countless poems, songs and novels, these mountains are praised as a romantic and patriotic landscape and as a place from where Polish cultural essence and character may be found and extracted. Hence, already in the early stages of Zakopane's development as a tourist destination, local as well as national culture were seen as connected to and incorporated within the natural and cultural heritage of Zakopane. As the Internet quote illustrates, this connection between place and culture is clearly reproduced and sustained - at least in a moderated form - into the virtual and global marketing of 21st century tourism.

The second reason for the suitability of this quote for the endeavour of this thesis has to do with the way different human and non-human entities are brought into its account. Although the quote talks about culture, it also refers to and makes use of many entities and artefacts in conveying what Zakopane is. These are items such as clothes and buildings, narratives such as the fairytale and representations such as the gingerbread house. Also a more vague entity such as atmosphere is accentuated as well as the spatial categories of Poland, capital, resort and the Tatra Mountains. Finally, the quote is itself conveyed through the help of Internet technology, allowing the destination to expand to a global audience. This shows that although culture may possibly be the way by which the destination is sought communicated and marketed, it is only by referring to and deploying these multiple enumerated entities that culture is made communicable. Culture cannot 'act' alone, but requires a heterogeneous set of human and non-human actors in order to be conveyed to us, in order to 'work'. Hence, the quote illustrates my attempt to introduce the destination as a highly heterogeneous assemblage by pointing to how a wide array of socio-material entities are connected in order to construct and transmit it. As I will demonstrate throughout this work, Zakopane is aligned with a battery of socio-material entities with which and in which it is mediated and constructed, in which it is sustained and made durable, as a tourist destination.

What the above quote illustrates is the simultaneous *cultural purification* and *heterogeneous ordering* (Latour 1993) working to construct the destination. This dual process of *presence* and *absence* (Law & Singleton 2005) shows that in order to perform the destination in specific ways, a disparate *collectif* (Callon 1986) of heterogeneous human and non-human actors is both necessary present, but also sometimes necessarily made absent. Culture is made present as it is connected to and engaged with the tourist destination in an attempt to define, fixate and communicate it. Simultaneously, the attempt to construct and enact the destination in terms of culture is performed in and through ongoing processes of assembling and differentiating a multiplicity of disparate entities, whose work to construct the destination are then made absent. It is this work of purifying, ordering and hence of constructing the destination, which this thesis seeks to render visible. In order to do so, it is my intention to provide the reader with a number of descriptions of destination constructs and enactments along with an analytical and ontological frame to grasp such constrictions as socio-material and relational. Through these endeavours, my ambition is to address the questions of *what makes up a tourist destination* and *how such a destination is done and done over*.

Apart from wishing to share this view with all interested readers, the approach is most explicitly directed towards and against paradigms flourishing in subdivisions of tourism studies working with destination branding, marketing and intercultural communication. As will be elaborated later on, much research within these fields of research champion or imply the ideas of the destination and its culture as stable, objectifiable and manageable entities. This understanding, retrieved in much research on place branding and marketing, sees the destination as a tools and as a malleable and pliable object in the hands of marketers. It asserts the idea of the destination brand or identity as something which must strive to comply with specific needs or wants of tourists. This understanding is inspired by a functionalist theoretical grounding of communication in which communication is perceived as a manageable, directed and predictable instrument (Askehave & Norlyk 2006).

Criticising this approach, I argue in this thesis that a functionalist understanding of communication and the destination reduces its actors, places and practices to simple instruments to further various business objectives. Instead, I propose to challenge this static and reductionist approach by developing a more complex and multidirectional understanding of not only processes of tourism communication, but also the workings of the destination, which it wishes to communicate. Following the lead from the field of critical tourism studies³, but also adding new understandings such as the relational and socio-material aspects of tourism, I advance the idea of the destination as a processual and complex construct in which actors, such as branders, marketers, locals and tourists, and their respective objectives are related to and constructed through a multitude of objects, technologies, artefacts, people and discourses.

The body of work presented here seeks to account for this heterogeneous jointing by uncovering the invisible and often deleted work, which lies embedded in the destination construct. In order to diversify the narrow set of parameters in managing and branding the destination, this approach challenges the limited range of actors, pictures and discourses other than those recognised as 'official' contributors to the destination communication by the application of a broad definition of destination actors and practices. Hopefully, this allows for a more inclusive and heterogeneous understanding as to how and which entities engage in the ordering and enactment of the destination construct.

An inclusive approach to the destination construct involves both looking at the way the destination is imagined and represented, but also, and just as importantly, how it is performed and discursively and socio-materially assembled in the relational linking of a broad variety of human, nonhuman and non-social elements (Law 1994, Michael 1996). It is argued, that this approach manages to integrate both the managerial and business-directed approach as well as the socio-cultural perspective – or more precisely, that it levels out the differences commonly perceived between the economic and socio-cultural definitions of the destination. This symmetrical approach inspired by the relational and socio-material methodology of

³ See Ateljevic et.al. 2007 for a presentation of recent so-called critical tourism studies

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in an attempt to circumvent questions of identity, i.e. what the destination *is*, by directing focus on to how the destination is *done* as a plethora of actors are continuously assembled and reassembled within its network

Delimitation. Or cutting the network

The descriptions to follow are not to be seen as maps seeking to document or represent a stable, unchanging destination in a one-to-one relation. It does not plot the destination onto an empty canvas, or perceive it as a container to be filled with meanings or actions. The descriptions in this thesis cannot be used to identify, or even less retrace, the trails which were walked in their compilation. Rather, they must be seen as *charts* tentatively sketching fluid networks, outlining ongoing events and recollecting stories. By charting movements through the destination network, the descriptions seek to convey not one, but many versions of the destination as it is enacted as multiple (Mol 2002) through doings which take place within its network.

Such an approach to the destination has its disadvantages and limitations. First of all, a relational approach is confronted with the difficulties of demarcating the network and specifying its boundaries. Marilyn Strathern discusses this in her article *Cutting the network* (1996). As the title suggests, Strathern seeks to deal with the methodological and practical implications diverted from the realisation that processes or streams of relations never stop, but endlessly tie into an expanding network. According to the author, the analytical power stemming from the following of actors in their doings also become its problem, since theoretically these networks are limitless. 'If diverse elements make up a description, they seem as extensible or involuted as the analysis is extensible or involuted. Analysis appears able to take into account, and thus create, any number of new forms. And one can always discover networks within networks; this is the fractal logic that renders any length a multiple of other lengths, or a link in a chain a chain of further links. Yet analysis, like interpretation, must have a point; it must be enacted as a stopping place. Now if networks had lengths they would stop themselves. One kind of length is imagined by Latour: networks in action are longer the more powerful the 'allies' or technological mediators that can be drawn in. [...] We may also say that a network is as long as its different elements can be enumerated. This presupposes a summation; that is, enumeration coming to rest in an identifiable object (the sum). In coming to rest, the network would be 'cut' at a point, 'stopped' from further extension' (Ibid.: 523).

Perhaps this thesis could be seen as such an 'enumeration', as an attempt to draw together processual network elements into a frozen whole. This freezing is necessary because, as also noted by Strathern, 'the interpretation must hold objects of reflection stable long enough to be of use.' (Ibid. 522) This stabilising through description may be perceived in itself as a way of stopping a flow or of cutting the network, or offraming specific stories in time and space. As also noted by Law (2003), links are created in the very process of constructing the objects of study as the 'object of study', in this case the destination, inevitable cuts potential networks and draws various entities together.

A second way of cutting the network, which is also identified in Strathern (1996), is by looking at the way human and non-human actors perform it themselves. This cutting is observable by the way actors in their doing exclude various entities or activities from their networks. In my analysis, I point to several social-material circumstances which take part in drawing boundaries for participating in the destination network, for instance through ownership or Górale (Highlander) identity. As is shown, even though specific criteria work as ways of delimiting particular versions of the destination, the boundaries and definitions of these criteria are both fluid and negotiable. However, my approach is not just a way to pass on a realism in which, according to Emirbayer (1997:303), the network is treated 'as a social fact only in that it is consciously experienced as such by the actors composing it'. Instead, I take on a nominalist approach which 'proceeds from the concepts and purposes of the social-scientific observer' (Ibid.:303). This approach takes the correspondence between the analytically drawn boundaries and the subjective awareness of these boundaries by participants as an empirical question rather than an assumption. Emirbayer exemplifies this approach with Bourdieu's *field of practice* where 'boundaries are drawn in accordance with the observer's (and not the participants') frame of reference' (Ibid.:304). In a somewhat circular argument, Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) argue that 'we may think of a field as a space within which an effect of field is exercised.[...] The limits of the field are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease'(Ibid.:100). This way of delimiting the field through the tracing of its effects was also applied in the present investigation of the destination. This approach was undertaken, since the destination was not always 'confirmed' or recognised by the informants some of them rather seeing Zakopane as a village⁴. As such, the boundaries could also have been shaped through, for instance, a community study. However, by keeping my attention on tourism related effects as a way to trace and delimit the boundaries of my descriptions, it was the construct and contours of the destination which continuously appeared, if not unambiguously, then at least with a certain irrefutable force.

In this thesis, tracing the network was done by following the actors, events and artefacts which from my position seemed to influence and partake in enacting specific versions of Zakopane as destination. According to Law, the character of the network of organisations - in this case the destination - must be treated as 'an effect or a consequence – the effect of interaction between materials and strategies of organizations' (Law 1992:389). As such he continues, 'an organization must be seen as a set of such strategies which operate to generate complex configurations of network durability, spatial mobility, systems of representation and calculability – configurations which have the effect of generating [...] center/periphery asymmetries and hierarchies' (Ibid.:389). As I show, the effects of and upon the destination were traceable in legislation and regulations on food products and street vending, in physical manifestations such as graffiti and houses and in performances closing down ski slopes or opening hostels, in discourses evaluating restaurant practices or defining local identity. This does not mean that the resulting descriptions reflect very strong network effects or tell representative or very hegemonic versions of the destination. Rather, they are

⁴ This destination/village distinction is further elaborated in chapter 5

versions which have *worked*, although sometimes modestly, and which have somehow created an outcome, whether contingently or strategically.

The actors and modes of ordering introduced in this thesis are seen as particular to the tourist destination of Zakopane. Hence, the thesis displays how tourism related practices, modes of ordering and performances are used locally as a motivating, legitimizing or (de)stabilizing tool by and through different actors in a simultaneously local and global network. Although no 'recipe' is proposed on the socio-material construction and enactment of the tourist destination, it is still claimed however, that the relational and socio-material character of the practices and processes which they perform are endemic to other tourist destinations as global discourses and technologies of tourism are entangled with idiosyncratic local narratives, objects, spaces and institutions.

In the following, I will provide some examples demonstrating the connection between various past and contemporary statements about Zakopane. Apart from a wish to familiarise the reader with Zakopane, I introduce these passages in order to firstly show that the term of 'tourist destination' is not the only way to define Zakopane. When consulting different historic and current narratives of Zakopane, the label of tourist destination is challenged. This highlights the ambiguous and contested character and identity of the town and the fact that the notion of destination is not unequivocally recognised – in both senses of the term - by all. In order to explain why I, in spite of this fact, gradually began to perceive and apply the destination as a central concept, I secondly use the quotes to demonstrate how other definitions of the place are incorporated into and aligned with the concept of tourist destination. By using the quotes, I display the pliability and productivity of the destination, hereby substantiating why the destination ended up - in spite of the controversial character of this concept – to become the incision, or the network cut, which was performed on Zakopane throughout this thesis.

The tourist destination – a contested concept

My fieldwork in Zakopane took place in the winter peak season of January to April and again during the summer peak season in August of 2007. During that time, I met with and talked to many different so-called tourism stakeholders⁵. My stay it was striking how potential or real conflicts and changes related to Zakopane as a tourism destination were so differently responded to by informants as they would emphasise, dismiss, contest, ignore, or explained these occurrences away. The actual stance would naturally depend on who was being addressed. In some contexts, tourism appeared as a minor detail in the locals' perception of Zakopane. In others, its role and influence – whether as a curse or a blessing - would reach paramount heights. The role and practices of intercultural communication in tourism, my preliminary object of investigation, consequently undertook a variety of expressions by being evaluated in so many different ways.

⁵ In the following analysis, these individuals have been partially anonymised by using only their first names. However, due to the fact that Zakopane is a relatively small town, this anonymity is only partial for some of the informants as many of these hold prominent and often official appointments. The decision to maintain the first names was made as anonymity was never discussed during my interviews and as none of the interview quotes contain sensitive or outrageous viewpoints.

Topics within the field of intercultural communication – such as issues of there being something within the workings of tourism which might be addresses in terms of cultural exchange – appeared very clearly as much more contested and more complex than one would imagine when consulting the substantial amount of research within areas of impact studies (cf. Smith 1977, 1989) and cultural communication (FitzGerald 2002, Crouch 2005) in tourism.

Zakopane was not only conceived of and narrated as a tourist destination, but also as a birth place, a work place, a village, a national centre for culture, a spot of natural beauty. Sometimes the ‘fact’ that Zakopane - with its three million annual visitors - was a very large tourist destination was entirely ignored, contested or even dismissed. As a consequence of these many opinions on Zakopane, there is no unequivocal answer to what Zakopane *is*. One might see Zakopane as a place containing endless different locations and endless different modes of organizing, as ‘a network of different worlds’ (Law 1994:43) in which the tourist destination is just one of many. However, as this thesis clearly attests to, I did end up encompassing the object of study as ‘the tourist destination of Zakopane’, however disputed and contested this definition is. Through the following presentation of various quotes, I will try to argue for why I chose to analytically ‘cut’ Zakopane in the term of a destination by showing the pliable ways in which other definitions are included into, ordered or in other ways working upon the destination narrative.

Intense and careful descriptions of Zakopane must effectively be said to have been carried out through countless publications and works by often renowned and mostly Polish scholars, writers and artists. Many accounts, from cultural and natural treatises over poetry and novels to guide books and travelogues have accounted for the history, arts, folk culture, geology, climate and sense of place of this ‘winter capital of Poland’ (Braumberger 2007). An early account of Zakopane is the very first chronicle written by Jozef Stolarczyk, the first parish priest of Zakopane, in 1846:

‘A village called Zakopane is located at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. Its inhabitants belonged to the Czarny Dunajec parish at first. This was part of the Szaflary church, which was a branch of the one in Nowy Targ. In time the part belonging to Czarny Dunajec was incorporated into the parish established in Chochołów, and the other part merged with the parish in Poronin’ (from Gutt-Mostowy 1998)

Although by the time of writing, an early form of tourism was slowly developing in Zakopane, it is not this identity which is accentuated, but rather its religious status as a parish, highlighting a local geography of church administration. Today, the parish chronicles are to be found in the guide book *Podhale. A Companion Guide to the Polish Highlands* (Gutt-Mostowys 1998). I came across it on a hostel book shelf, where it had been left by a previous guest. As stated by its introduction, the travel guide is aimed at Polish-Americans returning to their homeland as tourists⁶. In this book, the description not only display the former religious-

⁶ As many as one million Americans of Polish descent can trace their roots to the Southern region of Podhale (Gutt-Mostowy 1998), in which Zakopane is both an administrative and cultural capital city. As such they present a substantial and often affluent potential customer market for what is referred to as ethnic tourism (Ostrowski 1991)

administrative undertakings of Stolarczyk, but now becomes of interest to tourists, some returning to experience the homeland of their ancestors. By simultaneously referring to Zakopane's past, its early administrative/religious status and its current relevance to Polish-Americans, the chronicle is used in the guide book to incorporate history and religion as central themes to understanding Zakopane today. It has become part of a present-day narrative of the tourist destination.

Another way to narrate Zakopane as a tourist destination is provided by 'Pysiu', an anonymous Austrian web blogger on Tripadvisor, an interactive travel website offering more than 15 million tourism reviews. Some 150 years later after the former description, we come across a rather different definition of this Carpathian village:

'Best ski resort in Eastern Europe. Zakopane is one of the most charming mountain resorts I have ever seen. Wonderful in the winter for skiing and excellent for hiking in the summer. More than that, the city itself has a soul. Wonderful highlander culture with music, food, and architecture makes one feel as he or she is in a fairy tale. There are lots of restaurants, shops, galleries, festivals, pubs, night clubs, theatres - one simply cannot be bored. I highly recommend it!!!'⁷

This narrative labels Zakopane as the best ski resort in Eastern Europe⁸. Furthermore, various primarily leisure orientated activities are connected to Zakopane which is – once again – likened to a fairytale, as in the opening quote of the chapter. What is noticed when taking a closer look at both quotes is not only how the local is disseminated into a wider global context, through for instance the Polish Diaspora or the World Wide Web, but also how the destination and various connected entities are identified, organised and certified by experts as 'historic', 'cultural' or 'recommendable'. Through combining history and present, various people, places and activities, the destination is stitched together as an attractive place worth visiting. Bringing all these activities and the feel of the place together simply - yet in very diverse ways – contribute to the destination construct.

In connecting the people who ask 'what Zakopane is like' (potential tourists, guide book readers, internet users) to the actors telling or in other ways conveying 'how it is' (Stolarczyk, Dr. Gutt-Mostowy, Pysiu), different resources and materials are assembled to identify, mediate and authenticate the destination. As we shall see in the last quote, the destination is not challenged on its status as a tourist destination, but more on its status as *good* destination, as a place worthy of visit, as 'recommendable'. Such is the case with the next

⁷ www.tripadvisor.com, accessed on 11/7-2008

⁸ Recommending Zakopane as the best ski resort in *Eastern* Europe is definitively a matter of dispute. Poland is officially regarded as part of Central Europe, but as exemplified in the present, the country is sometimes included as part of Eastern Europe. I encountered this phenomenon from time to time when talking to Western tourists. On imagined and de facto West/ East boundary drawing see Buchowski (2003). On the concept of Mitteleuropa and its construction see Delanty (1996) and Gerner (1992).

section of a text entitled *The Lure of Zakopane* written by an anonymous writer on the blog Polandia, a 'collaborative blog written by a mixed bunch who live and work in Poland'⁹.

Zakopane is a small town (population: 28,000) in the extreme south of Poland situated in a valley at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. Few people outside of Poland have ever heard of it, but it is the number one tourist destination for Poles in their own country. About 3 million of them go there every year (genuine figure). This May Day holiday weekend saw about 250,000 of them descend on the place from all over the country. Nobody seems to be exactly sure why though. I've never been to Zakopane for the following reason: whenever the subject comes up in conversation it always seems to go something like this: Polish person: It's a holiday weekend, everybody will be going to Zakopane. It's such a small crowded place and there's hardly anything to do there. Have you ever been? Me: No. Polish person: You should go!! Me: !? Maybe I'm missing something, but if these conversations tended to include the words 'fun,' 'delightful,' 'fascinating,' or 'relaxing' more often I might feel differently. Every winter holiday and more or less every other public holiday seems to bring out some bizarre lemming-like herding instinct in the Polish people. They pack up their cars and head to Zakopane. The main road heading to the town, the infamous Zakopianka, is inevitably choked with barely moving traffic for days on end. It takes hours to get there even from Krakow, which is barely 100 km away; it must take days from Warsaw. I'm sure the mountains are very pretty, but southern Poland is stuffed full of mountains; there must be other towns with equally dramatic backdrops?¹⁰

In the quote, the writer interrogates the fuss over Zakopane. In many ways, this interrogation condenses and pinpoints the challenges currently facing Zakopane as new actors enter the network of this destination. These include foreign tourists, currently comprising around 15% of the totally amount of visitors and rising¹¹ (or non-tourists, as in the above quote), but also international tourist agencies and service chains (restaurants, hotels, etc. See chapter 8 for a discussion on the hostel). Through the engagement and workings of these new network actors, changing socio-material practices, performances, contexts and historical references are integrated into the destination network.

The point of deploying these quotes is not to show that tourism is a complex process containing many different stakeholders, objectives and opinions, which to both researchers, practitioners and tourists may be close to stating the obvious! Rather, the quotes are used to show the pliability by which the destination 'absorbs' and aligns heterogeneity. The quotes work to construct the destination not in spite, but rather *because* of their obvious dissimilitude. They confirm that there are many ways to characterize Zakopane and that some things may be highlighted or negotiated while still maintaining its role and identity as destination.

⁹ www.polandia.com

¹⁰ <http://polandian.wordpress.com/2008/05/05/the-strange-lure-of-zakopane/>

¹¹ These numbers are taken from the Tourism Development Strategy of the Zakopane Majors office. However, these numbers are highly uncertain due to the lack of cooperation between authorities and private tourism businesses and a substantial lack of reporting from private accommodation providers (Private communication, Zofia)

They also demonstrate the different ways in which different actors relate to the destination network. The travel book relates ex-pats or descendants in America to their native country in or around Zakopane through the expertise of Dr. Gutt-Mostowy. The website connects potential or visiting tourists to former - and in that sense also 'expert' – visitors in their search for information about the destination. The Polandia-blogger challenges the qualities of Zakopane as a destination, while still acknowledging it as one.

Other quotes could have been added to the above from the Internet, travelogues, in-flight magazines, brochures, locals, tourists, other visitors (such as my own two research assistants or friends and family visiting during my stay) or from people encountered in other places which were in some way familiar with and opinionated about Zakopane. Not all support or recognise the features pointed to in the above, not all approve of the definition of the town as tourist destination. But as will be shown in the analysis, all these various actors are part of challenging, performing and reproducing how Zakopane is done as a destination. It is these often incoherent, contingent and more or less stable performances, illustrated by the above quotes, which I seek to describe as they are deployed and ordered into the recognisable but also contested construct of the tourist destination. As a network - one might even venture to call it a *centre of ordering* (Law 1994:104) - the tourism destination of Zakopane is highly productive. It works and generates effect by creating jobs and income, spreading itself over the Internet, at tourism trade fairs, in the media, in brochures and advertisement. It alters the appearance of the landscape, the infrastructure and the town; it modifies and impacts the practices and events taking place. It draws in, represents and translates history, heritage, culture, folklore, conservation as well as innovation, development and strategy into a whole: a productive and partially coherent entity, namely that of the destination.

Thesis outline

In the following, I will seek to briefly outline the chapters to come. After this overall introduction to the thesis, chapter 2 accounts for my theoretical approach to the study of the destination. I do so by contrasting it with other views upon the destination, e.g. that of the destination as a product and as a socio-cultural construct. Departing from this, I present and discuss the advantages and limitations of applying a socio-material and relational approach inspired by the Actor-Network Theory. Chapter 3 discusses the consequences of the socio-material approach in relation to the construction of reality and knowledge. In this approach, the creation and enactment of knowledge and reality are seen as generated through and inseparable from research practices. It is argued that not only is analysing a place as a destination a construction or a way of cutting the network in a certain way, but so is the research and knowledge, which enables or coproduces this construct. The research process is described as an intermediary arrangement created by the application of different knowledge-generating methods and techniques. I present how this assemblage came together at, and together with, the destination as the last-mentioned was materially and discursively investigated and hence, enacted. A last part of this intermediary arrangement is identified and discussed in chapter 4 namely the hinterland. This hinterland is identified as a compiling of specific subfields within the knowledge producing network of tourism research on which this thesis is based and enters into discussion.

Before introducing the analytical chapters, I will begin with stating that in order to avoid a high-flown and cumbersome chapter on 'theory', most analytical chapters contain more detailed discussions of the themes which they touch upon in a more specific relation to the destination. Another reason for this approach, other than to avoid suffocating the reader in literature reviews and de-contextualised discussions at the very first part of the thesis, is to situate and relate knowledge and practices of research to a specific matter (e.g. place) and field of study (Zakopane). Even though the chapters analyse and discuss notions such as difference, place, materiality, ownership and agency, they are also stories about graffiti on a fence, smoked sheep cheese, hostels and wooden houses, museum paintings, folk costumes and landownership. Hence, the analytical chapters are intended to be read as allegories over the destination, as both stories and analysis, not seeking to be the one or the other, but rather a little of both.

The first analysis in chapter 5 addresses the theme of difference and the practices of difference-making at the destination. Not an unknown theme in much, mainly anthropologically inspired tourism research, difference is first addressed as it is represented in tourism literature. I argue that it is often grounded either in difference in culture or in agency and leading to at least potential conflict. This understanding is also retrieved with destination actors, as they contrast the business man to the village, development to preservation. Instead of stopping our analysis with the identification of divisions and differences, it is suggested to view these as effects. In this perspective, differences and conflicts are not immutable or natural substances, but rather appear as tools for constructing and structuring the destination and as actors in their own, productive rights. Chapter 6 starts with a discussion of space and place. It is argued that place in a relational approach is constantly constructed as a socio-material entity and constantly done by its actors. It is shown how places are created in both hegemonic and contested ways. Although the tourist destination may be seen as a highly planned, restricted or commodified place, it is also heterogeneous, flexible and poly-vocal, exemplified with a discrete and short-lived deployment of chalk graffiti on a fence.

In chapter 7, the socio-material aspects and workings of the destination are narrated through the story of a small, yet iconic destination actor: the oscypek, a smoked sheep cheese. It is demonstrated how the cheese is enacted in different versions as entities such as mountains pastures, traditional craftsmanship, hygiene, EU legislation and tourism are engaged into its various practices. It is first shown how the cheese 'travels' into different networks, in which it is met with specific requirements and secondly how its subsequent versions ultimately affect the destination network and (some of) its actors. In Chapter 8, the traditional highlander house and the land of the Górale is firstly ethnographically interrogated. This reveals its role in creating social identity and as a strategic ordering tool affecting and restricting the development of the destination. It also shows, however, that the position and role of the house is not fixed, but flexible and negotiable. As various actors challenge and transform the house through new practices of tourism development, illustrated through the hostel, new house and tourism practices are enabled at the destination. Challenging the common understanding of entrepreneurial agency in tourism (and agency as a human characteristic altogether), this shows that both house and property create opportunities, set limits and hence, that they act.

The last analytical chapter 9 seeks to interrogate the concept of Górale and its workings at the tourist destination. Like the first analytical chapter on difference, this chapter addresses this notion not as a stable identity, but as an effect. Using the Górale restaurant as focal point, it is shown how Górale is represented and negotiated through a variety of heterogeneous actors and practices. Seeing Górale not just as a stable entity or purely cultural substance but rather as a strategic actor within the destination network challenges identity and authenticity as stable entities 'out there'. Finally, the insights provided by a socio-material approach are introduced and discussed in chapter 10. Dividing the insight of this thesis into two, that of specific insights into the destination of Zakopane, and that of general insights into the understanding and study of the tourist destination, I discuss how a socio-material and relational approach proved beneficial. Through the example of a TV commercial on Polish golf tourism, I conclude the thesis by discussing how communicating and branding places as tourist destinations must acknowledge the heterogenic and socio-material connections which are part of their practices. This is informed by an understanding which sees the destination as doable only when working as a fractionally coherent actor-network.

Chapter 2
Constructing the Destination.
From product and cultural landscape to network



In this chapter I will seek to do two things. First, *I will account for the socio-material and relational approach* which I have chosen to apply to this study of the destination. I will do so by accounting for the ontology and methodology of this approach and discuss how it differs from other ways of studying the destination. Secondly, I will clarify *how this approach affected the destination as an entity of study*. I wish to show that speaking of Zakopane as a tourist destination is an analytical construct. One might even call it a research trick or an epistemological illusion. It is so because Zakopane is also a multiplicity of other things to a lot of different people in addition to being a tourist destination. Next to being a place of visit and sojourn for approximately three million tourists each year, it is also a place of great importance and meaning to locals, other Polish citizens and foreign visitors, a home to many and a workplace to even more. In a cultural context, Zakopane has been termed the main town in one of the most distinctive of Poland's 'ethnographic subregions' (Achmatowitz-Otok 1985) and a town which emerged from its anonymous village status to become renowned in Poland and abroad for its tradition and peculiar *genius loci* which became a source for national rebirth (Gutt-Mostowy 1998). Zakopane has been described as 'an important, perhaps even unique centre of Polish national culture' at the turn of the 20th century, (Grom 1975). In the 20s and 30s Zakopane's motto was 'skis, dancing and bridge' (Braumberger 2007) and today it is referred to in much tourism material as Poland's winter capital.

As I will try to substantiate throughout this thesis, whether to encompass and describe it as a home, a workplace, an ethnographic, cultural or entertainment 'hub', or a destination depends on how Zakopane is *enacted* (Mol 2002), how Zakopane is done through a continuing, socio-material and relational work process engaging and connecting a multiplicity of actors. This thesis itself is a result of such a work as well as a construct describing and simultaneously enacting Zakopane as a destination. This performance was enabled and performed (among other) during field work by and through engaging and talking to people, reading books, monographies and tourist brochures, observing and participating, inquiring into and making use of tourist services and destination structures: ski lifts, museums, menus and music to mention but a few. As I in any way make claim of covering, fully accounting for or even entirely connecting the numerous actors, processes and practices taking place at the destination, this thesis may be seen as a product of the precarious tying together of disparate entities into a provisional and contingent whole. What it does, is hopefully to demonstrate the ongoing transformations and emergencies as well as the demarcations and disputes of Zakopane when described as an enacted and constructed destination network.

This understanding of the destination challenges a number of other ways of studying and defining it within tourism research. Two such approaches will be presented in the following, after which I will more thoroughly introduce ANT by which my own relational and socio-material approach is informed. After this, a critical discussion will address and discuss the weaknesses and challenges in adopting ANT as a rigid ontology. Instead, a modified variant of ANT is proposed through which the tourist destination might be seen as *multiple* (Mol 2002).

The concept of 'destination': Approaches of business and socio-cultural construction

In tourism studies, the destination is commonly regarded as a privileged tourism space (Bærenholdt et al. 2004, Jóhannesson 2005). Question is one what basis this privilege or special status is accorded. Before introducing ANT in further detail, I will discuss this by first showing how other researchers have identified two contesting approaches to defining and studying a place as a destination, namely a business/objective and a socio-cultural/social constructivist approach. These two approaches are introduced primarily based on the work of Framke (2002, 2002b) and Ringer (1998). After presenting and discussing these two approaches, a third approach is advanced which sees the destination as a socio-material produced and enacted actor-network.

In the article *The Destination as a Concept: A Discussion of the Business Perspective versus the Socio-cultural Approach in Tourism Theory* (2002) Framke seeks to investigate the understanding and application of the destination concept¹². In his literature review, the author uses text books from Danish tourism training programmes to investigate how the destination is presented to students. He notes that a destination must be seen as having a static dimension, which he terms the place¹³ and a dynamic dimension: 'the mix and agglomeration of agents and products/services, varying with the tourists' historically changing demand' (Ibid.:105). In his investigation of the application of the concept of destination, he then explores how these differing types of research integrate and encompass a notion of *boundary* and *content*, how they describe *cooperation* and understand *the role of tourism behaviour* in the destination construct. The author argues that the notion of destination must pay attention to interaction, cooperation, networking and social practice. Although Framke finds diverging responses to the above questions, not only between, but also within paradigms, he still identifies two competing approaches - or rather clusters of approaches, as they are by far two homogenous factions – which he divides based upon their perception and deployment of the destination concept into a business and socio-cultural approach.

The first is grounded on the understanding of the destination as a *physical or spatial container* to be filled with appropriate offers, services and products, connected to certain images and identities and subsequently displayed and offered to tourists¹⁴. As also mentioned elsewhere (see Jenkins 1999, Dahles 1998, Gallarza et al. 2002, Dredge 1999), the destination in business related studies is taken as a starting point for observing and researching tourism through its organizing, measuring, conceptualisation, branding, planning, or modelling. Hence, it is conceived as a place, where tourism activities are unfolded (and may be measured), where tourists, industry workers and planners as well as locals are physically present and - at least potentially - interacting. In this perspective, the destination is seen as the reason to travel, hereby representing tourism's *raison d'être* (Cooper et al. (1993), in Framke 2002:97).

¹² The article is based on a 2-year research project on seeking to combine a humanistic and an economic approach to the destination (see Framke 2002b)

¹³ It could be argued that a better term would be that of space, which is often used for referring to the physical, quantifiable qualities of a place. See de Certeau (1988) for his distinction between strategic space and practiced place.

¹⁴ For a further discussion on the container metaphor of space, see chapter 6.

In business perspectives, the destination is subject (and object) to many attempts of improvement and manageability based on tourism research describing how (and why) to do so. In this optic, the destination is seen as created by and generated through tourism. In terms of measuring the destination, research attention is given to the tourists' destination awareness as well as their attitudes and feelings of satisfaction. This is carried out based on assessing the actual destination offers as well as images and perceptions of the destination (Morgan & Pritchard 2002). Destination attractiveness, popularity and competitiveness are investigated among potential or actual visitors, again based on actual or perceived attributes. Selection and decision making processes are studied to measure tourist motivation. All these undertakings strive at controlling the marketing and management of the destination and its image, hence improving and strengthening competitiveness and revenue surplus in the highly competitive business of tourism. In this perspective, the application of the term 'destination' to a place defines it as an outcome of marketing efforts of place marketing, staging and branding or as a product emerging from the industry's determination and evaluation of its tourist qualities, based on criteria such as attractions, accessibility and amenities (Burkart & Medlik 1974 in Framke 2002).

This perspective is challenged by an approach which sees the destination as a *socially constructed place*. In this perspective, the destination is viewed as constructed in the intersection between the tourism industry and tourist and local culture(s) through processes of conflict, reciprocity, and negotiation¹⁵. A way of encompassing the destination directs attention towards ways in which both industry, tourist and local 'hosts' are taken into consideration as part of a social construction of the destination. Here, the destination is not merely defined through measurable tourism activity, but through socially constructed meaning embedded herein. An example of this approach is a collection of texts entitled *Destinations. Cultural landscapes of tourism* (1998). In its introduction, Ringer proposes 'a humanistic and holistic interpretation of tourism and cultural landscapes [...] emphasizing a localized, socially constructed environment often overlooked' (Ringer 1998:2). The publication is an attempt to challenge a rigid business definition in which "'Destination" connotes the agenda and perspective of the tourist and the industry' (Ringer 1998:3). In seeing tourism as a cultural process and by attempting a place-centred and constructivist rather than an exogenous approach, the contributors of the book seek to present alternative geographies of tourism and landscape that transcend the contrived versions of culture and history presented by the tourism industry' (Ringer 1998:2). In their opinion, the destination is not just a fabrication of the tourism industry, but one which emerges in the convergence of different actions undertaken by different people.

Following Ingold (1994), Ringer argues that 'the destination of the tourist and the inhabited landscape of local culture are now inseparable to a greater degree' (Ringer 1998:1). For this reasons, Ringer wishes to challenge a unidirectional perception of influence based on a 'billiard ball' model in which self-containing entities merely hit or clash without any actual 'internal' consequences. Moreover, the perception of the

¹⁵ See chapter 4 for a more thorough discussion on the business/culture divide in tourism research. For a critique of this perceived divide in tourism research between a business and socio-cultural approach see Ren, Morgan & Pritchard (forthcoming) in which a reading of the research field of tourism as a *partially coherent actor- network* is proposed.

destination as place must move from being perceived as an inert stage into which different elements are simply added to a centre of *meaning*. Using the concept of reciprocity, Ringer proposes to show how the destination becomes 'a negotiated reality, a social construction by a purposeful set of actors' (Ibid.:5) which is 'shaped through the processes of globalization, modernity and mythology' (Ibid.:9). The destination must be grasped as a historically dynamic place where peculiarities of place and people are to be taken into consideration as they contribute to physical and social present-day processes. Hence, the contributors to this publication propound the destination as a socially constructed cultural landscape of tourism.

As a critical response to the physical geography, Ringer's proposed cultural geographical approach 'go beyond landforms, soils, vegetations and climate' (Ibid.:6) and focus on the socially constructed landscape and its enactments and interpretations. The cultural perspective is presumed to create a divide between what is 'landforms, soils and vegetation' (nature) and what is human institutions and values (culture). Ringer strives to show how 'people construct geographies' (Ibid.:6) and he identifies process of production through the study of historical dynamics as 'shaped by social values, attitudes and ideologies as they contract and expand, deteriorate and improve over time and space' (Ibid.:7). Just as in Framke's account, Ringer performs a splitting of entities by representing the destination as a social construct. Ringer et al. refer to a cultural and social sphere by which we are able 'to make sense of the often turbulent and highly dynamic social systems within which tourism exists today' (Ibid.:10). As such, the cultural landscape is investigated in *opposition* to the natural, to the real and objective by looking through a lens of the social sphere¹⁶.

Returning to Framke, we see how the author is confronted in his review with a highly resilient destination concept. The concept is understood, represented and analytically applied in a variety of ways: as a narrative, an attraction, a geographical unit, a marketing object or an empirical relationship. Framke also notes that since the concept of destination is closely connected to and often defined by the tourism industry and the activities of tourism, it is often associated with the negative impacts of commercialisation, commodification and privatisation. In the light of this broad and contested variety of uses of the concept, Framke rhetorically asks if the term is more confusing than clarifying.

As a consequence of these fluid retorts of his literature search and analysis, Framke ends up entirely questioning the sensibility in deploying 'destination' as a useful concept when doing research *at the destination* (which, he claims, does not exist *as such*). His dismissal is based on a quote from Leiper stating that 'There is no evidence that any destination ever attracted, in a literal sense, any tourists. [...] The main causal factors of tourist flows are not located in destinations but in *traveller generating regions*, in places where trips begin, where the forces that stimulate tourists' motivation are located and where marker systems directing tourists to nuclear elements of attractions begin.' (Leiper 2000:366, in Framke 2002:105, my emphasis). Hence, tourism takes place not as a consequence of a pull, but rather a push force located somewhere other than the destination. And secondly, the destination is defined, according to Framke, by

¹⁶ It should be noted that neo-geography offers new potential for multi-layered representation and integration of dynamic and potentially conflicting narratives (see Nielsen & Liburd 2008 for further information)

outside generated action, not by internal (or relational) characteristics. To Framke, the term destination should only be applied in relation to marketing and seen as a field for the creation of narratives, images and brands. This conclusion rests on the assumption that it is only in the processes of communication between the marketers and consumers in the tourist generating regions that the destination exists. There is no 'destination, but rather differentiated (and possibly interacting) spaces of tourism: the tourists own tourist spaces (socio-cultural constructs) as well as industry created economic spaces, each of which has 'its origin in images promoted by the marketing mediation of a place called the destination' (Ibid.:106).

Concluding, Framke declares himself unable to provide a proper (or fix) definition of the destination as economy and culture interact in precarious and confusing ways and blur the distinctions between them. As a consequence and a response to such confusion, he introduces new ontologies of space in which different activities in disparate or matching settings create differentiated spaces: that of tourism, that of economy, that of marketing. Things are not only ontologically split up, but also separated on an epistemological level as these spaces are suggested investigated using different concepts. In the following, I shall argue against this conclusion by showing how it is based on an impossible attempt of simultaneous division and purification.

The destination as heterogeneous network

The above understandings of the destination are examples of what Bruno Latour describes as processes of purification. According to Latour in his book *We have never been modern* (1993), modern sciences have enrolled in a project of simultaneous *division* and *purification*. This was attempted by neatly enacting a split between entities that were then seen as different: these were entities such as science and social, the human and the nonhuman, the object and subject. This was performed through practices by which clear and distinct boundaries were sought outlined and maintained. According to Latour purification created 'two distinct ontological zones: that of human being on one hand; that of nonhumans on the other' (Ibid.:10-11). The idea of purification was originally formulated by Latour and Woolgar (1979) based on their laboratory observations. There, they describes how entities of what we commonly refer to the social or non-scientific sphere (coffee drinking, run down, unstable material) was gradually 'taken out' of the scientific process as scientific results and knowledge moved out from the lab (see also Law 2007). The processes of purification hence effaced the heterogeneous web of relations of which knowledge production is dependent (Law 2007:5). Such was the case of the laboratory, where 'messy' relations between the social, the technical and nature were removed from truth claims of the modern world. I argue, that it is exactly this mode of splitting up and purification that Framke and Ringer seek to perform in their questioning and attempt to identify and delimiting what the destination *is*.

As a way to transcend this entrenched fight over definition in which the destination is considered and encompassed in terms of *either* a container, a product, a representation or a socio-cultural entity, I argue that the destination constructed and ordered by *heterogeneous networks*. This grip seeks to capture all of the above understandings into a whole. The term 'a whole' does not imply a coherent and well-fitted entirety, but rather a collective which in some way or the other, precariously and temporarily, is held together. This

approach acknowledges and accommodates rather than ignores the inconsistency, ambiguity and disunity in constructing Zakopane as a destination and proposes to see this network as holding together *because* - and not in spite of - its ability to embrace ambiguity and to contain a broad range of practices, discourses, performances and artefacts. This understanding is grounded in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), a relational and socio-material approach which will be introduced in the following.

In this account of my ANT-inspired - or less specifically (and idiomatic!) *socio-material and relational* - approach, I have applied a very selective reading aimed primarily at providing the reader with an understanding of its particular ontology. As I will show, an ANT-inspired approach is adopted because of its ability to seize the relational and heterogeneous character of reality and break down the dualisms between people and things, the social and the material and the object and the subject by describing how things are 'stitched together' across aforementioned divisions and distinctions (Murdoch 1997). The reason for choosing this, rather than other, theoretically affiliated approaches, such as discourse analysis or semiotic analysis, is its sensibility towards close descriptions of the simultaneous ongoing ordering and fluid heterogeneity of discourses, materials and practices which, to me, are all striking features of Zakopane as a tourist destination. The approach is far from an all-encompassing grand theory and is here applied pragmatically because of its emphasis on associations and multiplicity and the importance given to everyday life. In the analytical chapters to come, a more specific use of concepts such as space and place, radical ontology, agency and identity will be more comprehensively accounted for as they are introduced and put to work.

In this present more general account, I am firstly drawing from the earlier work of Bruno Latour (1981, 1986) and Michel Callon (1986), which originally set out from the field of sociological science studies to investigate and theorise the creation of science and scientific knowledge. In these works, the fundamental and distinctive features of ANT are addressed. These include how a multiplicity of entities other than humans contribute to the construction of our social-material world, how this construction must be described by closely following everyday life practices of assemblage and translation and how it should be analysed in a symmetrical manner, which seek to avoid dualist divisions between different entities of analysis. Secondly, I use the work of Law (1992, 1994) to describe the way *modes of ordering* shape our world and everyday life. Later on and incorporated into the analysis chapters, I draw from the work of researchers such as Law & Singleton (2005), Mol (2002) and De Laet and Mol (2000). These are contributors to what has been termed the ontological or performative turn of ANT (Nickelsen 2003) and are drawn upon because of their focus on the relational and performative nature of practices of everyday life. In this approach, the lack of singularity is stressed when exploring the enactments and multi-discursive orderings of objects or realities. Finally, I also draw from the work of Michael (1996) on the construction of identities and of René van der Duim (2005, 2007), one of the few tourism scholars having worked explicitly with an ANT, for instance in the development of the notion of *tourismscapes*.

Bridging dualities and depurifying objects of study

As mentioned in the above, ANT seeks to develop an ontology which transcends the binary thinking in which neither entirely natural nor entirely social hybrids are recognized (Castree 2002). In ANT, the binary categorical closure is seen as ontologically incomplete, leading to 'a conception that entities are "essentially" either social *or* natural prior to their interaction with one another' (Ibid.:118). From this ontological divide emerges a dichotomous manner of thinking in which entities, problems and solutions are delegated as part of either one or the other through a process of translation referring to 'the work through which actors modify, displace, and translate their various and contradictory interest' (Latour 1999:311). One might say that modern science works not through the Roman strategy of dividing and conquering, but also and simultaneously by *uniting* and conquering. As a consequence of modern science's eagerness to concurrently separate or unite 'pure' entities, modern science simultaneously produces hybrids. This comes to pass through the association of heterogeneous entities in which 'mixtures between entirely new types of beings: hybrids of nature and culture' (Ibid.:10) are created. These hybrids are entities created through a simultaneous work of purification and translation in modern thinking seeking to purify networks in which the natural and the cultural are 'hopelessly mixed up' (Underwood 2002:89). Hence, 'the modern project requires that we don't think of the two levels, the worlds of purification and translation, at the same time. Otherwise the belief that thought can be clear, that ontology is possible, that our life can be controlled by the right ideas, would dissolve. And because we cannot use our much refined tools from the world of thought, the world of hybrids does run out of control and is filled with all sorts of monsters on which we depend but which we don't understand.' (Underwood 2002:89).

As an alternative of maintaining and reproducing modern boundaries, Latour (2003) suggests that we 'direct our attention simultaneously to the work of purification and the work of hybridization' (Ibid.:11) by developing discourses and narratives which recognize the mutual constitution of humans and artefacts. On a methodological level, this means that 'instead of starting from universal laws – social or natural – and to take local contingencies as so many queer particularities that should be either eliminated or protected, [research] starts from irreducible, incommensurable, unconnected localities, which then, at a great price, sometimes end into provisional commensurable connections' (Latour 1996:3). It is through such types of investigation that I wish to describe how the destination network perpetually and contingently comes about, how it is performed and negotiated in and between entities of 'all sort'. Hence, I do not presuppose the destination to substantially be 'out there', but rather seek to describe the multiple ways in which the destination network is continuously created, practiced and enacted – how the tourist destination is done.

Analytical symmetry

One of the most contentious parts of ANT relates to its view on how to study our surroundings from a non-anthropocentric approach with a more committed focus on the material and non-human side of our world and a fair and balanced approach to both the material and the social in its description. ANT wishes to unwrap our worlds 'black boxes', the things which we naturally refer to culture, to the social, to the physical, non-social or

non-human sphere. By challenging our cultural and social matters of course and the things which are taken for granted through a symmetrical approach, ANT shows how these are created by the complex and intricate linking and ordering of heterogeneous entities (Latour 1999). Through the principle of so-called general symmetry (Law 1994:9) between heterogeneous entities such as the human and the non-human, an analytical levelling is set in place 'bracketing of common-sense categorization of the entities under investigation' (Bruun Jensen 2003:226). It is important to stress however that studying how various human and non-human actors are ordered, associated and accorded agency following the symmetry principle does not mean that things and people are *the same*, but simply that they are accorded equal analytical status and attention. As noted by Barbara Czarniawska (2007), 'symmetry can be maintained without symmetrical parts being identical' (Ibid.:8).

This first, important step of symmetry seeks to eliminate established dualities with which we as social and cultural researchers usually orientate ourselves. A socio-material approach focuses on both the social *and* material character of reality and on the relational character of their association. It demonstrates the social-materially constructed aspects of the world, at the same times stressing its physicality and relational character. The social and the material entangle and affect each other in a constant and not separately distinguishable process of mutual creation (Law 1999). In this relational understanding, separating the two parts when collecting and analysing (processes which are in themselves not clearly separable) is pointless (Emirbayer 1999). In order to carry out symmetrical analysis, the rule 'which we must respect is not to change registers when we move from the technical to the social aspects of the problem studied' (Callon 1986:200). The socio-material descriptions emerging from symmetrical analysis provides us with a new outlook on our field of study in which the relations between a variety of 'building materials' take place within networks. In these networks, the various sorts of materials help frame social interaction as network actors, hereby making the networks possible and durable (Latour & Callon 1981). Hence, in both an ontological and analytical sense, the social is not separable from the material in human society (Latour 1991). In that respect, the actor network approach is an attempt to bypass the ongoing debate of realism versus constructivism by focusing on the *relational effects of concepts* – not on whether they might be constructed or not (Murdoch 1997, Law 1992, Jóhannesson 2005). Hence, sociological dichotomies such as nature/culture, agency/structure or social/material are seen and analysed as *effects* or outcomes of the relations in which they stand or are put to work - *not* as a natural underlying basis of analysis.

Actors and their networks

The actor-networks relational and transformative capacity may be seen as a tool to overcome the agency/structure contradiction, as 'the actor-network is reducible neither to an actor alone nor to a network' (van der Duim 2007:150). The socio-material direction and symmetrical engagement of ANT descriptions entail a sensibility towards radically new actors detectable through their effects, engagements and workings within heterogeneous networks of tourism. These actor-networks are characterised by their heterogeneity and capacity of constant relational transformation between the entities of which they are comprised. Another characteristic of the actor-network is its constant activity: 'Networks require a "performance" on the part of all

enrolled elements' (Murdoch 1998:366). If there is no performance, there is no network effect. Entities are no longer actors, no longer enrolled in the network. The network changes or even ceases to work – and hence to exist. The actor-networks are constantly produced, constructed and negotiated through the *net-working* and seamless intertwining of its actors, uncovering the entangled and relational character of categories otherwise conceived as pure (Barnes 2005). Latour stresses how the actor-network is a connection and mutual transformation/translation of actors and not, as often (mis)understood 'an instantaneous, unmediated access to every piece of information' (Latour 1999:15).

In the actor-network, material entities have the capacity to act just as well as humans since agency can only be explained through a necessary composition of forces, in which action is 'not a property of humans but of an association of actants'¹⁷ (Latour 1999:182). This fundamentally challenges our understanding of the actor and what it means to act. The actors' inclusion in the network is not based on a certain ontological status (such as being human), on strength and mobility or intentionality acting, but rather on the capacity and capability of linking, associating and ordering within the network. The power to act, to create an effect, is in ANT derived from the capability to *work* upon our surroundings, not from being human or as a consequence of intentional and human agency. Similarly, power is not to be seen as a resource to be possessed or exerted by *someone*, but rather as a relational capacity, which is created as it is distributed in the network. Action is created in and through the actors' possibility to affect and perform upon and within the network. The different roles which an actor may play are seen as effects of associations as 'entities become enrolled, combined and disciplined within networks [and] gain shape and function' (van der Duim 2005:92).

Just as non-human entities are not stable within the network, humans (or identities, personalities or individuals) are not conceived as preformed substances. The individual is not a fix substance, but a result of a reciprocal process between it and its network of relations. Human strategies, capacities or intentions are not viewed as the result of self-action or an inner 'will' remaining unaltered in the engagement with its surroundings (Emirbayer 1997). Rather, 'individual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded' (Ibid.: 283). The individual is not perceived as inter-acting as a self-subsistent essence within its context. Instead the individual is seen as *trans-acting* with its surrounding in processes which simultaneously create and shape the individual – and its surroundings. This entails seeing 'material resources, objects, spaces and technologies [as] much more than simply the outcrops of human intention and action. They also structure, define and configure interaction' (van der Duim 2007:151). In that respect, ANT provides a suitable theoretical and methodological toolbox to account for what Murdoch has termed the 'stabilization of action in a nonvoluntaristic fashion' (Murdoch 1997:325).

¹⁷ The term of actant is applied by Latour in his later work 'to include nonhumans' (Latour, 1999b:303) and in order to deviate from the term of actor which connotes being human. To avoid unnecessary confusing, I have decided to maintain the original terminology of 'actor'

Translation and modes of ordering

The concept of translation is introduced by Michel Callon in the article *Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay* (1986). To Callon, translations must be studied because they create the ability for actors to speak, act and represent others 'through processes rather than completed accomplishments' (Ibid.196). Translations are never stable or unchallenged but must be seen as 'a process before it is a result' (Callon 1991:19) as they are used to build 'a constraining network of relationships' between a variety of network actors (Callon 1986:212). In the translation, which must be seen as an on-going process, actor-networks are shaped by the connection and association of a broad variety of entities-becoming-actors involving a synchronic continuity of transformation and displacement of goals, interests, devices human beings and inscriptions (Callon 1986, Jóhannesson 2005). Hence, this concept helps accounting for how heterogeneity and arbitrariness is conveyed into at least temporarily coherent networks. Within the processes of translation which he describes, the identity of actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited (Ibid.: 202). Elaborating on this, van der Duim (2007) states, that 'translation refers to the process of negotiation, mobilization, representation, and displacement among actors, entities, and places. It involves the redefinition of these phenomena so that they are persuaded to behave in accordance with the network requirements, and these redefinitions are frequently inscribed in the heterogeneous materials that act to consolidate networks' (Ibid.:966). However, the processes of translation and the capacities to speak for or represent others, as Callon illustrates through the story of the abandoned biologists in the article, are never certain and translation may always, potentially, 'become treason' (Callon 1986:212).

The processes through which translation is carried out may be described as modes of ordering. The elucidation and description of modes and processes of ordering as well as the tracing of which 'links hold and which fall apart' (Murdoch 1998:367) constitute objects of study for the researcher as 'stable sets of relations and associations as the means by which the world is both built and stratified' (Ibid.:359). John Law uses the concept of ordering in his book *Organising Modernity* (1994) in investigating on how organisations and objects hold themselves together. Ordering is similar to translation since both refer to the way 'putative agents attempt to characterize and pattern the networks of the social' (Ibid.:101). In this and other works, Law displays how different modes of ordering are manifested or extended through a variety of logics, strategies or individual characters, technologies, materials and organisational arrangements as they 'run through and perform material relations, arrangements with a pattern and their own logic' (Law 2000:23). As Foucauldian mini-discourses they 'define conditions of possibility, making some ways of ordering webs of relations easier and others difficult or impossible' (Ibid.:10). Processes of translation and the modes of ordering through which these translations are arranged, elucidate how relational-gone-solid categories or entities are stabilised and become durable in relations *and* how they are simultaneously questioned, altered or made absent through their performance 'in, by and through those relations' (Law 1999:4).

Only in tracing ongoing processes of translation and ordering are we able to determine how things came to be in a successful and seemingly natural way. In this context, the entities comprising the actor-network must

not be taken for granted as natural starting points for the investigation. Neither may empirical or analytically importance or precedence of certain categories, phenomena, people or actions be established or assumed prior to the examination. Instead, the researcher's job is to 'trace and describe the network (relational practices) underlying these effects or categories' (Jóhannesson 2005:139). The question is what this specific network affords, what is negotiated, what is included and authorised and what is rejected and made absent. Also question is *how* this is done through a number of processes and modes of ordering. In short, descriptions must seek to convey what the destination network *does* and how this doing *works*.

Voices of criticism: the invisible individual and the managerial bias

Although increasingly gaining in popularity within the social sciences, ANT has also been questioned and criticised from many sides. In the following, I have chosen to accentuate two issues which I believe to carry relevancy in relation to tourism studies in general and this study in particular¹⁸. These two issues concern the *role of the human* and the *managerial bias* in ANT. After a presentation and discussion of these matters, I will present my proposition and lay-out for a relational and socio-material study of the tourist destination in which the pertinent criticism has been accommodated.

As possibly expected, ANT's insistence on a symmetrical approach towards humans and non-humans have created a stir. In the context of the sociology of scientific knowledge, Collins and Yearley (1992) have warned against incorporating material agency into interpretive schemes, instead stressing the importance of relying on humanist analysis and the accordance of priority to the human subject through distribution of agency. The symmetrical approach to humans and non-humans have also stirred debate regarding the question of agency, or rather intentionality. In his critique of the symmetrical principle, Pickering (1993) notes: "We humans differ from non-humans precisely in that our actions have intentions behind them, whereas the performances (behaviours) of quarks, microbes, and machine tools do not" (in Nickelsen 2003:94). According to Pickering, people - unlike things - have intentions which should be incorporated and taken into account in the analysis.

To these points of criticism, Callon and Latour (1992) argue that non-human agency should be contemplated from a semiotic point of view which, as stated by Nickelsen (2003) 'teaches us how to think symmetrically about human and non-human agents. In texts, actors are continually coming into being, fading away, moving around, changing places with one another, and so on. It is important that their status can easily make the transit between being real entities and social constructs, and back again' (Ibid.:93f)' Latour and Callon claim that the agencies spoken of are semiotic ones and are not confined to the rigid categories imposed by traditional thought.

Another point of criticism raised against ANT is its claimed managerial bias, which critics believe stem from an attempt to turn mess into order. In ANT descriptions, the network is viewed from the standpoint of the

¹⁸ For a more extensive discussion of the debates, see Nickelsen (2003)

manager, the innovator, or the victor. According to Watson (2007), ANT became too concerned with standardization and the rigidities of immutable mobiles, i.e. how things remain the same in spite of their shifting relations and moving around. ANT's emphasis on describing how (to make) things work sat aside the mess, making it unknowable or ignored (Law & Singleton 2005). As a part of this critique, ANT's claimed managerialism was attacked during the 1990s for being male and Machiavellian (Star 1991, Haraway 1997). Susan Leigh Star, among others, suggested alternative stories, perspectives and voices which not only focused on the 'winning stories', i.e. the ones which became effectual within strong and powerful networks. As an example of the often invisible work made by actors, Star provided a personal account of how she as an actor struggled with a standardised McDonald menu. In her attempt to avoid onions in her hamburger, she finally ends up scraping them out of her meal (Star 1991). Star points to this prosaic example of the silenced work, which also contributes to the stabilising of the network, is that most often this is unaccounted for in the tracing of ANT descriptions. This leads to claims of *quietism* (Nickelsen 2003:96) and to questions of whether the ANT researcher favoured specific types of 'winning' actors while overlooking others.

Both Latour and Law have acknowledged, recognised and addressed some of the criticism directed towards ANT. Latour (1999) even went so far as to recalling ANT, claiming that the terms *actor, network, theory* as well as the hyphen was misleading in the notion of 'actor-network theory'. However, Law has also reversely questioned the necessity of defending or criticising ANT, since we would then assume, as he points out, 'that something called "actor-network theory" deserves criticism or defence. But do we want to add succour to this assumption? I have argued that the approach is not a single entity but a multiplicity. I have also argued that it is embedded in case studies. If this is right, then general criticisms or defences of "the approach" are likely to mistranslate its epistemic and practical import' (Law 2007:11). Sharing this vision of ANT as merely a sketchy label for a plurality of research undertakings, I do not wish to engage in a defence of ANT. I do not use ANT in this thesis as a full fledged theoretical mould, but rather as a methodological guide in describing (and hence creating) the world in a relational process and as a way to understand the creation of knowledge through these descriptions. However, in adopting an ANT inspired approach in my analysis, I wish to refute any claims of seeking to silence or disregard the human capacity or intentions of individuals in general and specifically of the people with whom I engaged during my fieldwork in Zakopane. To the researcher, it must be clear that questions of silencing by and in the network are closely connected to power. As such, and as will be discussed further on, the researcher must strive not only to describe what is linked, ordered and associated in the network, but also what is *not*. Instead, as will be demonstrated in the chapters to come, I analytically attempt to regard human undertakings as connected to and embedded within a larger destination *collectif*, seen as 'an emergent effect created by the interaction of the heterogeneous parts that make it up' (Callon & Law 1995:485). This *collectif* is comprised of people as well as discourses, places and things.

As previously mentioned, the endeavours of this thesis are based on the understanding of analytical concepts as products of contingent relations rather than as purified categories or products of a certain social necessity. According to Law (1994) *necessity* implies 'that things were pre-ordained for general and possibly determinable reasons to work out that way: that they were shaped by larger-scale, long-range factors of one

kind or another '(Ibid.: 96). Law contrasts the understanding of necessity in modern social theory with *contingency* arguing that local arrangements reflect local circumstances. Hence 'we can't say anything very ambitious or general about how or why [things] turned out the way they did' (ibid.). According to Law a modest and pragmatic sociology must lean towards contingency, however adding that 'to talk of contingency is not to give up the search for pattern, but to assume that patterns only go so far [...] In other words it is to be committed to an *ordering* inquiry into *ordering*, rather than to an ordered inquiry which uncovers other root orders' (Ibid.: 97). According to Law, the social might be contingent, but is never idiosyncratic. This is so because the social is subject to a number of recurring - although not hegemonic - ordering efforts. In relation to this thesis, this makes it possible to create descriptions of general, as well as of specific interest. The intention with describing the tourist destination is to render specific ordering efforts visible, but also simultaneously to point to both ordering and heterogeneity as ways to generate a new understanding of the destination as a relational and socio-material network. In the following sections of this chapter, I will now seek to describe the notion of destination which is created by adopting a relational and socio-material approach, namely the *allegorical* destination construct.

The destination. Representations, narrative and allegory

According to Law (2000), narratives are themselves modes of ordering, devices of ordering. Narratives are discursively performed by distributing values, judgements and legitimacy, hereby becoming chained to other narratives. An example of such a narrative ordering device is the representation. According to Law & Benschop (1997), 'to represent is to perform division. To represent is to generate distributions. [...] To represent is to narrate or to refuse to narrate. It is to perform, or to refuse to perform, a world of spatial assumptions populated by subjects and objects. To represent thus renders other possibilities impossible, unimaginable. It is in other words, to perform a politics. A politics of ontology' (Ibid.:158). Law points to a number of narratives, such as 'plain history', 'policy narratives', 'ethical narratives', 'esoteric narrative' and 'aesthetic narratives' which in spite of some discordance often support each other.

All these ways of telling and ordering reality are retrievable from the destination material, hence creating yet another narrative, that of the destination. In this narrative, an abundance of representations of tourism places, people and practices take 'the form of statements (or other representations) that correspond to manifest absences in straightforward ways' (Law 2000:88). Although representations and other narratives work in powerful ways, Law however rejects Foucault's idea of *epistemes*, a notion where logics of narratives 'come in very large chunks' (Ibid.:16). Instead, he notes that 'the established disorders are multiple, not singular' (Ibid.:18). Not only are they small and multiple, they may also interact with each other creating what he calls "interpellative interference" (Ibid.:24). From this understanding emerges the comprehension that representations, i.e. the direct description, may never become one-to-one with the things they seek or claim to represent (Law 2004). Although claiming status as 'institutions of authority' (Ibid.:89) and as literal depictions of reality, representations are never direct, but *always mediated*. As purified reality spokesmen they perform an Othering on 'the mediation that have created its apparent transparency' (Ibid.:97).

According to Law, representations are in fact allegories denying their character as allegories (Ibid.:89). This *allegory* is an entity which, contrary to the representation, is capable of holding 'two or more things together that do not necessarily cohere (Ibid.:90), hereby creating space for ambivalence and ambiguity. The allegory is a notion which seeks to hold together entities which do not fit together as meaningful wholes, discourses which do not come together as coherent, representations which do not directly transmit or mediate an underlying reality. Unlike the representation, the allegory does not claim to speak for itself, but instead 'discovers – and enacts – new and only partially connected realities' (Ibid.:93).

Therefore, and as a way to avoid the claims of coherence and purity which are made by representations, what I propose in the following accounts are allegories. They do not seek to represent or transcribe reality, since reality is seen as processual and relational, shaped and created by the concepts and theories applied to it. Allegories are seen as a mode of discovery – or perhaps a way of ordering in a highly disorderly fashion – as well as 'a set of tools for making and knowing new realities' (Ibid.: 98). Allegories are concerned with the absences, Otherness and difference produced by and merging from the powerful gaze, the strong text, the hegemonic discourse, the pure vision. They do not seek to efface differences or incoherence, but rather wishes to bring them forward along with the work, which is done to order or Other them. The allegories work as analytical resources to display, that concepts are context-bound. Allegories are applied as ways to describe the complex workings of the destination narratives and as ways to both interfere with and analyse the destination representations without making claim to another coherent whole.

Through marketing and branding, the destination is constructed and represented as consistent and singular. The textual coherence of brochures and catalogues, internet sites and brands create a homogenous, highly proliferated and seemingly coherent reality. In the following chapters however, other realities are enacted as multiplicity intrudes. As non-coherent realities, they escape the single destination narrative by subverting identities, negotiating differences and contesting places. By highlighting the narratives as allegories enacting the destination, this thesis denies the possibility of accounting for or representing the destination in a coherent manner. The stories of this thesis differ from statements taking form as direct representations. They 'work in allegories' (Law 2000:98) as they do not claim to shed light on or mediate a truth. Instead, the stories seek to walk along, both accentuating and blurring 'the boundaries between what is Othered and what is made manifest' (Ibid.:93). What this shows is that in and through its allegories, the destination is never coherent and never speaks for itself in a transparent manner. It is always a version, always to be – at least potentially – negotiated and reworked.

Allegorical destination. Studying the destination as construct

As already noted, ANT attempts to dissolve dualisms by adopting a more nuanced 'in-between-ness' created through relational work, also referred to as *associationalism* (Murdoch 1997). This dissolving is recovered in my effort to break down or transcend some of the strong divisions identified in the field of study and of tourism research itself (Tribe 2007). These include divisions between actors and structures of tourism, between the business and the social experience of tourism, between the local/micro and the global/macro

research perspective as well as between the material and the social. The associative endeavour conveys not only the characteristics of the destination as a physically demarcated entity, but also its discursive and symbolic representations, as well as the socio-material practices at and around it. As a relational theory, ANT does not seek to ask or uncover whether Zakopane *is* a destination, but rather sees the destination as an *effect* of specific links and relations between entities in the network, a network of actors and simultaneously an actor itself engaged within a larger network of tourism. As a consequence, no initial comfort of a stable and unquestioned entity of study is granted when studying the destination based on the above approach. Instead, it is meticulously stitched together bit by bit, appearing as a constantly created effect, not as a natural starting point for the analysis. This enables us to envision it as an *fractionally coherent* network or entity (Law 2002:8). From there, categories such as local identity, place, heritage, authenticity and strategy are no longer seen as inert qualities or staging backdrops to the tourism destination, but its product and result.

As has been shown in the above, ANT offers a radically new ontological understanding of the destination in seeing non-human and natural objects as 'afforded' with the possibility to act. Due to this and to the symmetrical approach to the field of study employed in ANT inspired investigations, the researcher is provided with the opportunity to use unorthodox informants and collect very diverse data upon which the analysis can be based. Strategy papers, brochures and ads, physical structures, food products, clothes, discourses, ski slopes as well as tourism consumers and producers and local residents all become 'informants' on how the network is constructed and upheld. By focusing on the integration and enacted connections of these informants, it is possible to detect a network of interacting actors. In a tourism context, this approach has many advantages in allowing not only the quantifiable, the comparable, the strategically best placed, or the most popular or loudest messengers to be selected as informants. Instead, it encourages inclusive research undertakings in which a variety of social and natural entities are constantly comingled (Callon 1986). As a consequence, the tourism destination emerges as a heterogeneous network mediating between and embedding otherwise divided notions of culture and economy, actors and structures, humans and non-humans¹⁹.

This approach entails seeing and describing our object of study in whole new ways. Tourism phenomena or categories in question are not perceived as a priori substances to be analysed, counted, related or described as stable, static and dualistic (Jóhannesson 2005). The destination, the travel package and products, tourism innovations, local culture, host-guest conflicts or authenticity are instead regarded as effects of processes of the network and its ordering – and as creating effects in and through the network and generating ordering in themselves. Studying the destination means seeing it not just as a fix entity, as a purely physical space or as an empty container to be 'filled' with attractions and facilities, cultural meaning or development strategies (Tinsley & Lynch 2001). Rather, the destination is to be understood as a heterogeneous network or as a

¹⁹ The notion of hybrid could also be applied to this definition of the destination. However, as also noted by Latour (1993), this implies a place, time or ontology in which the divisions were real and not just based on purification. As such, there is nothing which is *not* hybrid.

collectif of people and things. The destination does not exist in or by itself, but is rather being crafted and assembled – to look therefore for the ‘pure’ or ‘true’ destination or for its essence becomes meaningless. The destination is to be perceived as a relational category stabilised, working, imbued with meaning and given sense through relations between network entities. The construction is seen as the process of connecting, stabilizing and disseminating relations between a given tourism network and its actors. These processes take place through performances which enable composites of the network at the same time as network agents make tourism spaces ‘performable’ (Haldrup & Larsen 2006).

The interest of the analysis is the destination relations, rather than the constituent elements themselves. Practices may not be understood *in their own right* but only in relations to other practices. As we must not assume some categories to be relevant prior to the investigation, we must not either beforehand exclude others as we can not know or establish in advance what actors are most significant or important in specific networks (Jóhannesson 2005). If someone or something work in or are enrolled within the network in whatever way, it must be part of the description. However, we must also seek to address the questions of why some things, groups, people or other entities have come to define, sell, illustrated, talk on behalf of or otherwise represent the tourism product or place instead of others. This may be done by ‘describing the way in which actors are defined, associated and simultaneously obliged to remain faithful to their alliances’ (Callon 1986:19). A socio-material approach not only provides ‘a symmetrical and tolerant description of a complex process which constantly mixes together a variety of social and natural entities. It also permits an explanation of how a few obtain the right to express and to represent the many silent actors of the social and natural worlds they have mobilized’ (Ibid.).

The destination is not related to an agency or culture based model of explanation, as a result of *human* action or as *structured* by tensions between binary and opposing entities. Rather, it is to be thought of as the continuous workings of things, people, technologies, money, information, images and brands (Sheller & Urry 2004) materialized into the hybrid configurations (Callon & Law 1997) making up the destination network. The identification and description of the destination as a heterogeneous network emphasises the different roles of objects, technologies and the material environments in enabling tourism practices and performances (Haldrup & Larsen 2006). Exactly through its *net-work*, the destination enables the constant production, construction and negotiation of tourism.

The ongoing work of translation of things, people and discourses is perceived as indispensable in becoming acknowledged or being recognised as a tourism actor. Following Law, the stabilisation of the network may be seen as a constant process of *punctualisation* (Law 1992) by which the destination stays together as a punctuated network by being repeatedly performed in a routinised and unquestioned manner. It is these processes of punctuation, of keeping together through of multi-discursive ordering, practices and enactment which must be captured in order to describe the destination as a network. Zakopane *works* and *acts* as a destination and is *performed* and *articulated* as one. Indeed, on emphasising the highly diverse and contested outcome of the destination as a relational network of heterogeneous collective action rather than

the causes 'behind' it, this thesis is in itself an ontological enactment in producing and performing a specific version of Zakopane.

In a relational and socio-material tourism study, the researcher seeks to provide descriptions of the heterogeneity of tourism through the interweaving of multiple levels, narratives, characters and discourses into a single text. The translation and ordering of wooden buildings, goat cheese, folk musicians, hostels, politicians, mountain pastures, restaurants, guides and web pages act and take part in the working or doing of the destination. Processes of translation may also relate, as shall be unfolded later on, to the ability to speak and act on behalf of the place of Zakopane as a destination or as a place of culture, the power to appoint those belonging within the network or the resources to reshape the material or visual expression of the city. In the article *Surveillance of the worlds of tourism: Foucault and the eye-of-power* (1999) Hollinshead argues that researcher in tourism must strive towards the registration of how 'tourism (often unsuspectingly) matters in the making dominant of some inheritances/narratives/attractions and in the suppression or the denial of other traditions/storylines/drawcards, and on another level how individual managers, developers, researchers in tourism and travel quickly engage in smaller and larger acts of cultural, social, environmental and historical cleansing, as they promote and project some socio-political universes and chastise or omit other possible contending worldviews' (Ibid.:7). These processes of exclusion and inclusion, omission and suppression must also be more carefully addressed and traced by following and tracing the processes of translation and ordering by which the actor-network is naturalised, as it becomes a stable black-boxed collectif (Callon 2001).

An ontology of fractional coherence

As was shown in this chapter, the ontology of ANT is populated by a multiplicity of people, objects, materiality and technologies. A relational and socio-material approach was presented as a way to include this rich texture into the description of the destination. In this approach, the destination is neither delimited as an economic entity or framework, nor reduced to a socio-cultural background for human interaction. Instead, it opens up to a symmetrical approach, which encompasses complexities, shifting meanings, relational identities and heterogeneous enactments. The destination must not be seen as an essence and its properties may not be assumed prior to the analysis. Labelling Zakopane as a destination works as an analytical grip, as a way of constructing and ordering the fieldwork data. However, not according stability, essence or *a priori* existence to the object of analysis is not to say that it is without significance. On the contrary. Ordering the network and its entities simultaneously create, reify and enact it.

The above introduced an approach with which to research and describe the people, practices and multiple 'bits of pieces' of the destination through a symmetric levelling of the social and material, human and non-human, economic and cultural. Hence, this approach includes matters into the investigation which is typically excluded from what we traditionally conceive of as part of our social or cultural field of research. Through its methodological analytical application, it transforms the space encompassing our study. This is also the case for the destination which is no longer perceived as a physically bound entity of study or as a strictly tourism

induced construct. Instead it emerged as a stabilised network of heterogeneous actors created through the active involvement of many often unacknowledged actors in their various performances on and of place.

The description and tracing of simultaneous interconnected and contradictive network relations make it possible to envision – and to know - the destination and its network constructors in their heterogeneity of multiplicity (Law 2000). A relational and materially sensitive description provides a richer, broader, and more inclusive notion of the destination, not only in research but also in the communication and promotion of destinations, by showing us what creates it and how it is made up. In relation to the marketing of the destination, the heterogeneity of the destination assemblage and of the actors participating herein challenges the common brand management strategy of ‘image mainstreaming’, often seeking to create and promote one unique selling point (Ren & Stilling-Blichfeldt 2008). By applying a socio-material approach, a complex multiplicity of actors emerges from the destination construct, showing that tourism is never ‘pure’ in its categorisations, never coherent in its planning and never truly controllable in its communication.

This realisation leads on to the following chapter in which the methodological consequences of applying an ANT inspired approach are explored. Also, this approach is discussed as an ontological tool as it addresses how knowledge and reality are created and enacted through research practices. As will be shown, an ANT inspired methodology sees knowledge as created through and in research process in which the creation and enactment of knowledge is entangled and inseparable from our methodology and research practices. When studying the network, we work on and perform within it; we become part of it and it of us. Hence, a discussion of the use and application of methods becomes a discussion of ontology and of knowledge creation (Law, 2004).

Chapter 3

Methodology, midpoints and intermediary arrangements



'The world is a web of relations. Continuous, discontinuous, configured, ragged. And those relations have no status, no shape, no reality, outside their continued production. This means that the concern is with process.

It is with how particular realities get made and remade. And then how they sometimes, possibly often, get themselves embedded so that they become obdurate and resistant'.

Law 2004b:2

As argued by Mustafa Emirbayer in his article *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology* (1999), relational theory stands opposed to an inter-active approach to the social in social theory in seeing the entities of analysis as constituted in and through constantly unfolding processes. In a relational or *trans-actional* perspective, 'the very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within the transaction. The latter, seen as a dynamic, unfolding process, becomes the primary unit of analysis rather than the constituent elements themselves' (Ibid.:287). This understanding has far-reaching and extensive consequences for the way the 'object' is encompassed and researched. To avoid an a priori understanding of what the destination is or of who or what it is comprised, the descriptions of the destination must focus on the 'the complex and controversial nature of what it is for an actor to come into existence' (Latour, 1999:303). In my perception, Zakopane as a destination is such an actor, as well as a network, creating and holding a particular reality. It is 'a spokesperson, a figurehead, or a more or less opaque "black box" which stands for, conceals, defines, holds in place, mobilizes and draws on, a set of juxtaposed bits and pieces' (Law 1994:101).

In order to follow and describe the destination construct and the ongoing creation of its particular spatio-temporal reality, we as researchers need 'to position ourselves at the midpoint where we can follow the attribution of both human and non-human properties, where we can look at the intermediary arrangements that are much more interesting than the extremities of nature and culture, local and global' (van der Duim 2005:17). In the previous chapter, it was introduced how the destination could be seen as such an intermediary arrangement. In this present chapter, I will discuss how the knowledge generated through the present work may be regarded as a product of an intermediary arrangement. The discussions in this chapter will serve the purpose of exposing and discussing the entanglement between commonly separated entities in connecting and discussing their place and working within a network of knowledge and research creation. This understanding forms part of the ontological and epistemological base of this thesis and is grounded on the assumption that research and its various components form part of a heterogeneous and poly-vocal network in which knowledge production is seen as an effect of continual processes of ordering. This is described by John Law (2000) as 'arrangements that recursively perform themselves through materials – speech, subjectivities organizations, technical artefact; and that therefore, since they perform themselves alongside one another, also interact with one another (Ibid.: 23). In the following I will show how this arrangement was constructed and performed in and through the investigation of the field or network of research.

Before doing so, I will first however demonstrate an example of such an intermediary arrangement of the object of research from my fieldwork. Or rather, I should say from a time and a space where I thought my fieldwork had ended as I had just returned home to Denmark after my first three-month stay in Zakopane. My fieldwork was 'over' as I had returned to my office when I received an email from one of the two Polish students, who had assisted me with translations during my stay. The email contained the English translation of an interview entitled *A Dane in Zakopane* published in the weekly newspaper of *Tygodnik Podhalański* (Podhale Weekly). The interview had been conducted by a local journalist shortly before my departure from Zakopane. As I read the text, my field, my research and my own position as researcher unravelled to me in a new version.

'Carina has come to Poland from Denmark. She is writing her PhD on tourism and intercultural communication. The place where she decided to work on her ambitious project is Podhale and Zakopane. [...] Where does the idea of going to Zakopane from Denmark come from? It came four years ago during a visit to Poland and Podhale, when she was fascinated by a Górale wedding. "I was enchanted by this event. I remember one of the people – probably influenced by alcohol – singing wrapped up in an EU flag", says Carina. "I got back to this fascination when I had to decide on the topic of my PhD. That is when the memories became vivid again". Carina's PhD studies are still in progress. [...] She had gathered a lot of material so far. She has been researching the history of literature and the Podhale folklore and culture. She has been gathering information on the region from websites, brochures, catalogues and newspapers (*Tygodnik Podhalański* and *Kurier Tatrzański*). She has visited many museums and tourist attractions. She has been to ski slopes, churches and galleries. She has made many interviews with people working within tourism and culture. She has interviewed mountain guides (Maciej Krupa), regional artists (Karpiel Bułeczka), ethnologists (Stanisława Trebunia-Staszek), local restaurant owners (the 'U Wnuka' restaurant). She has also talked to young people still in school. She has taken an active part in the city's cultural life. She has visited the 'Atma' villa during March chamber music evenings. She has talked to sculptors, painters, members of folk groups, musicians, journalists. She contacted the local tourist agencies and the ones organizing trips from Denmark to Poland. She has also interviewed the organisers of the International Highland Folklore Festival and the Highland Film Review.²⁰

By literally spelling out my endeavours of doing research in Zakopane, the article excerpt demonstrates and points to some of the many intermediary arrangements to which my research was included and connected. It also shows how research and the researcher are brought into work as they become connected to various entities and translated through different channels. The enumerated entities in the newspaper article are connected in what to me, at the time of my returning from fieldwork, seemed an unstructured manner. Still, they were fitted and crafted into a whole by the journalist conveying and producing a representation of what

²⁰ Interview published in *Tygodnik Podhalański*, 15/4-2007, translated by Maciej Rafinski

a 'PhD on tourism and intercultural communication' looked like and how such a work was performed in Zakopane.

Taking this article extract as point of departure for the discussions to follow in this chapter allows me to confront the object/subject divide in research and to challenge the limits and barriers set up between what is considered to belong to a personal and hidden realm outside of research and what is to be incorporated in the scientific account. Generally seeking to oppose this dichotomous divide throughout this chapter, I argue that research is a relational performance and a process in which the researcher is both a product and an active co-producer. As will be shown, this understanding affects the way we understand our research methods. In following and tracing the actors in their network activities, research methods take part in constructing their field by and through their own practices and techniques of tracing. Consequently, my research methods are introduced as part of enacting the reality, which they seek to describe and encompass. Moving on, I show how this is carried out through descriptions of discursive and material enactments at the destination. In a last attempt to conflate objective (theoretically groundbreaking, methodologically innovative) and subjective (personal, random) motives 'behind' a given research, I finally presenting (some of) the reason for why my version of Zakopane may be seen as a novel reading emerging out of both inadequacies and advantages of my partial views upon the destination.

Joining the research subject and object

As argues in the above, the newspaper article points to the intermingledness and enactment of the research process as it materialised in all its irrefutable, physical presence. This questions and blurs the distinctions between the places, practices and people involved in the production and generation of research and challenges the idea of a research body of knowledge 'behind' the researcher and the research field 'in front' of her. In the article *On the Subject of the Object: Narrative, Technology, and Interpellation*, John Law (2000) critically investigates how an understanding of the problem of the personal in academic writing creates a divide between 'whatever is "personal" on the one hand and that which does not change on the other' (Ibid.:6). Law demonstrates this divide as one continuously constructed 'through time and through different material – because the continuities, the logics, the discourses, run through the materials, human and non-human' (Ibid.:13). In showing the constructedness and contingency of distinctions such as public and private, knowledge and personal, as I also attempted in the interview quote, Law show these as 'constituted in the enabling logics of discourse that run through, permeate, and perform the materials of the social. They go everywhere, into our bodies, our practices, our texts, our knowledges, our town plans, our buildings, and all the rest' (Ibid.:13).

When first reading the translated newspaper article, I discovered how my fieldwork to Zakopane had, however unintended, turned into a very *symmetrical fieldwork* in how the observed had now become the

observer (Czarniawska 2007:10)²¹ and, reversely, how the research subject had become the object of scrutiny by the selfsame people, which she was regarding as potential informants and 'objects' of study. This realisation upset the possibility of strictly outlining a subject/object divide in my research and refuted the existence of a discrete and disassociated research position in which I was to observe, and not be observed, in which I was to point to and communicate the observations based on my own theoretical framework in my own words and time. The quote refuted this possibility as it showed the borderless blur between the research subject and object, between what is studied and who is conducting the study. It destabilises the strict understandings of what knowledge is presented, constructed and communicated in the research process – and how this process take and make place. The article also demonstrated – or rather performed – the lack of disengagement of research. The research, as it was represented in an 'objective' form in the article, participated to appoint what and who were considered worthy of investigating when studying cultural communication in Zakopane. As such, the article showed the impossibility of separating the object from the subject and of seeing them as two segregated and absolute categories. Hence, it may be used as a tool to bring forward their connectedness and to show the active and productive character of the 'personal' in the creation of and reflection upon knowledge.

The processes and modes of ordering that relate to this piece of research will be further elucidate in the next. The reason for this is that it is only by seeking to describe these processes, I claim, that we position ourselves at the midpoint - however local, situated and partial this midpoint might be, as is discussed in the following. This is important in relation to the field of tourism given that 'to travel is to live', a fact which the newspaper article did not fail to mention in a textbox using a quote by the Danish fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen. The point not only substantiates the theoretical basis of this thesis through the exposure of the embedded and performative character of tourism, but also inextricably – and ironically –aligns me with another – yet similar – tourism network, that of 'destination Denmark'!

Performing research

When tearing down the distinction between the subject and object of research and applying a relational, performative and symmetrical understanding to doing research, the researcher comes to be seen as a body constructed by and simultaneously taking part in the constructing the transactional context, in this case the field of study²². It is a view of this constant and effortful production created through ongoing performances of actors, which grounds this thesis. Change is not only understood metaphorically as an altered relation between body and language, or a relational modification in the externally attributed cultural or social status, nor as a change in perspective. According to Emirbayer (1999) a relational approach must not be mistaken for one of *inter-action*, which he describes as merely seeing entities as billiard balls colliding and reacting

²¹ This is to be understood quite literally, since the journalist working in the cultural section of the local paper had originally been contacted as an informant on how and based on what criteria local news on tourism and culture was selected for the newspaper and how it would usually be collected. Subsequently, the journalist suggested interviewing me and writing an article on my research in Zakopane.

²² Although it should be noted that from an relational perspective, the 'field' is not seen as a physically demarcated space or as something you might 'step into' or 'leave' by physically locating or distancing yourself. (See chapter 6 for a more thorough discussion of relational and actor network spaces).

without affecting the interior properties of the entities in question (Ibid.:285). Social objects or categories have no independent existence. They are not pre-given in isolation or seen as having an existence prior to their relationship with other entities. Rather, the entities change in and through their relations and associations. Hence, the components of which the researcher is constructed or made up are different than before because of a change in relations and relational entities. The transformation of the researcher is a *real* transformation in the sense that the researcher is now another. Equally and simultaneously, the field of study transforms as it is connected through and ordered according to theories, picture documentation, voice recordings, field notes, conference proceedings, journal or - as seen - newspaper articles, as it is turned into both a part of scientific investigation and the personal narrative.

The three year research process of the PhD is in the time of writing formally and officially approaching its termination - March 14th 2009 as stated by my contract. Almost like a *rite de passage* (Gennep 1960) the cycle of fieldwork relocation and subsequent returning affords the researcher to move from novice to experienced fieldworker. During this process, whether stepping forward with great determination or faltering steps, the researcher moves from initial, hesitating working papers and personal doubts into the 'doctoral'-certificated realm of scientific knowledge production. The fieldwork and later stages of the PhD process serve to demonstrate how the researcher is transformed in the process of connecting or interacting with(in) a given field of study. This simultaneous transformation of researcher and research is an effect of the work of *relations* between the individual researcher, the field of study, the knowledge product and the research community. The ongoing and relational transformation of knowledge, researcher and dissertation elucidate how all these entities leap into (or rather are a part of) the research production and materialised product. Neither of these entities are no longer the same as a consequence of the ongoing relations and transformations of knowledge, of research subjectivity, of entities of study or as a consequence of contract documents and formal dates of dissertation deadlines. Related parts of research and knowledge practices and production working within this specific research project interweave in their simultaneous assembling of and transformation by heterogeneous discourses, people, things, places and representations in and of the destination. In the following, I will more thoroughly address these heterogeneous processes, as they were carried out as research on the destination.

Situated research knowledge

This chapter seeks to participate in the messy undertaking of de-purify the research process (Latour 1993), by tearing down presumed or unspoken divisions or dichotomies. It is not my ambition to create a 'personal' research narrative (as this would create yet another distinction between the private and the public). Instead I seek to forward what Law has termed 'practices of knowledge-relevant embodiment' (Law 2000:8) as well as to display some of the entities and processes which I identify as a significant part in the current result. In accounting for some of the preliminary and ongoing choices, which along with coincidences, strategies, ideals, interests as well as practical, pecuniary and time limitations shape and guide research, I hope to provide the reader with an understanding of the processes and positions which led to this final result, to this cutting and freezing of an ongoing process. This is done by tracing how knowledge came to be ordered and

connected within the present manner. Hence, I demonstrate how and why my research and results materialised as they did, through meticulous and often random, yet complex intermediate arrangements.

This attempt to account for the knowledge production in this thesis is inspired by Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledge presented in the article *Situated Knowledge: The Science Questions in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* (1991). In her work, Haraway seeks to disclose and challenge the God-trick, which is the ability of seeing everything from nowhere (Ibid.:189). Based on a 'budding sense of collective historical subjectivity and agency and sense of our "embodied" accounts of the truth' (Ibid.:186), Haraway deconstructs so-called truth claims. This is done by demonstrating 'the radical historical specificity, and so contestability, of every layer of the onion of scientific and technological constructions' (Ibid.). Haraway seeks to reclaim vision as particular and embodied as opposed to a passive or infinite view and a route to disembodiment. In using this new vision, she claims, 'we create highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing the world' (Ibid.:190). Haraway dismisses the objection stating that all which remains when adopting a 'partial worldview is subjectivity. For her, relativism only mirrors the 'totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stake in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well. Relativism and totalization are both 'god-tricks' promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully [...]' (Ibid.:191). Instead, Haraway insists on 'the need for integrating accounts of contingency with reliable accounts of the 'real' world. These accounts are partial, since 'it is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective enquiry rests' (Ibid.).

The partial perspective may be conceived as an attempt to bridge or rather obliterate a discussion of subjective and objective knowledge, by insisting on its *performative* character. This understanding is forwarded by Law and Urry (2004). In the article *Enacting the social*, the authors reject two positions of criticism, the romantic and the scientific. While the first asserts that reality can not be known to us, the second implies an ultimate truth beyond the reach of social science methods. In order to avoid reconstructing yet another dualism of the romantic and the scientific, while the 'real' is 'real', it becomes a reality within relations. These relations are neither relativist nor realist – however, they are not arbitrary either. What is real is produced in 'dense and extended sets of relations. It is produced with considerable effort, and it is much easier to produce some realities than others' (Law & Urry 2004:395-396). Hence, the authors see the production of science realities as enacted in and through relations. Similarly, Haraway's (1991) feminist objectivity is based on limited location and situated knowledge. Objectivity here 'turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and definitively not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. This is an objective vision that initiates, rather than closes off [...]' (Ibid.:190).

This thought is further pursued by Mol (2002) in which she argues that no real singular, independent, objective reality exists. Rather, what appears are different and valid knowledges that can be neither entirely reconciled, nor dismissed. She hereby suggest, that knowing could well be as a process that is decentred,

distributed, but also partially connected. As proposed by John Law (2000), it is by specifying ourselves and exploring our own constructions as coherent, but also by emphasising the impossibility of the whole and the necessary commitment to sets of partialities and partial connection that we are able to re-appropriate objectivity as local and situated. This outlines the enterprise of what Law has termed a *modest sociology* (Law 1994). This is a scientific practice (which I as an ethnologist do not see as exclusive or limited to sociology) which does not resort to perspectivism, but insists on the actual existence, workings and consequences of an enacted, partial and mutable reality.

Enacting methods and following the actor

Seeing (science) reality as partial and enacted greatly impacts the understanding, choices and applications of research methods since their implementation to the field of research become as locally performative as they work to create knowledge about and in relation to the object under study (Law 2004, Law & Urry 2004). Methods are appointed a creative role in relation to the construction of specific knowledges and realities – they do not simply ‘uncover’ a reality out there. As a consequence of methods being part of the assemblage and enactment of reality, Watson (2007) asserts that ‘selecting a method is not a question of choosing the right tool to best depict “reality”. Rather, the questions could perhaps be: What kind of reality ought I be storying or co-creating? What collection of methods allows for the creation or maintenance of the best, or most responsible, or kindest social reality? (Ibid.:36)’. I shall not here unfold the political consequences of such a stance, but only confirm my support to criticising singularity and hence to ‘respond creatively to a world that is taken to be composed of an excess of generative forces and relations’ (Law 2004:9) – not least our own as researchers.

Based on this methodology, techniques and tools to explore the orderings, assemblages and workings of the actor network must be deployed in order to by describing ‘the steps in a process (which may collapse) whereby agents align the interests and functions of other agents together in a chain’ (Fox 2000:861). Emphasis is put on processes rather than results, on entities-becoming-actors rather than fixed social categories. In including objects and technologies as an active part in creating and mediating the destination, ANT transcends the traditional social and analytical division between the individual and the collective, humans and non-humans, action and structure, micro and macro (Callon & Latour 1981). By focusing on the relational character of categories otherwise conceived as purely social/technical/biological/economic, ANT cancels out their separation and reject their ability to act singlehandedly. Although this reveals a more chaotic and messy picture of the destination, it simultaneously reveals its complex, embodied materiality (Hayles 2005) also providing new insights into the heterogeneity that constantly creates and transforms it.

In a heterogeneous version of the destination, actors are, as will be unfolded in the analytical chapters, constantly busy denominating, differentiating and ordering themselves and each other, forging durable connections between things, practices and places at the destination. Empirical investigation is essential to establish the workings and orderings of these actors within the network. In order to discern the network, specific focus must be given to how humans, non-humans, discourses and technologies are ordered and

translated in the network. The empirical and analytical importance of certain categories, phenomena, people, objects or actions can not be established prior to the examination of the network and its materiality (Henare & Holbraad 2006). It is through the empirical examination of the relations between different actors that their power, importance and ability to speak, act, define and represent can be established. In this process, characteristics or identities such as local, foreign, authentic or commercial are seen as the *effects*, rather than the pre-given basis of social relations.

Detecting or tracing translations, workings and effects of the destination network involves looking at the way things, performances and practices are involved in the process of creating the destination. According to Latour, the objects of scientific results are at once discursively constructed, socially produces *and* materially real (Latour 1993). It can be argued that the object of the tourist destination is constructed in the same way. As a tourist destination, the place is communicated in a variety of places, through many channels, in many languages and directed towards many different groups of potential customers. It is imagined, planned and built, visualised and concretized. Discursive descriptions of the city, town planning ideologies and practices from different historical periods are confirmed and challenged through various practices. Barns, hotels, streets, gardens, housing blocks and ski lifts are translated and ordered as they enact or are used by others to enact a version of the destination. In these process of network enactment, artefacts, people and practices are connected (or not) to the network. Defining and performing the destination becomes an ongoing struggle and process of contestation (Edensor 2001) in which its enactments are influenced by various modes of ordering (Law 1994).

A very practical, but also analytically significant question when deploying an ANT approach, is where - and from where - the researcher may capture and describe the actor-network? Where does the network start and where does it end²³? The network is not to be found encased within a fixed geographical frame, as a set of structures or a delimited unit such as how one would ordinarily envision and study the destination. A one-on-one relationship between the field of study and the destination town as physical entity can not be asserted. Instead, a non-territorial approach to fieldwork must be applied in which the shape, importance and workings of the network are not known or to be taken for granted prior to its investigation.

Constructing and describing the network becomes possible by its meticulous and empirical grounded tracing. Instead of demarcating the field prior to its description, feedback from the field must guide and point on to the next places, objects, practices or discourses suited for further description²⁴. It is in the gradual tracing and producing of the field through our research practices that the field is created, as observable and detectable (Sørensen 2008). It is not beforehand shaped or restricted to fit in to research designs drawn up at the

²³ The act of following the actor and tracing the network emphasises the problem of delimitation in ANT. A practical and analytical challenge for the researcher is the fact that the network is fundamentally never-ending (as well as not having a beginning). This discussion of how to cut the network is found in Marilyn Strathern (1996).

²⁴ In his work, Marcus (1998) uses the term of multi-sited ethnography to describe his approach. Although adhering to his idea of following connections (and actors), I abstain from applying his territorially bound understanding of several sites.

research desk. In order to perform such tracings, George E. Marcus (1998) argues, that 'strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships are thus at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research' (Marcus, 1998:81). Marcus also suggests a strategy of following people, things, metaphors, allegories, plots, stories, life biographies or conflicts in his construction of multisite analysis in which the object of investigation may often transcend the strict confines of a pre-given field of study²⁵. These strategies are closely related to the following of the actors (Latour 1987) in ANT. Here, close studies of the actors and networks are used as a way to describe how these synchronously emerge, connected and aligned and simultaneously create the place in and through which they may be studied.

Doing fieldwork in a network

In this current research context, this technique of following the actor entails identifying and tracking tourism actors and the discourses and artefacts which are brought into circulation in an ongoing destination construct. According to van der Duim (2005) 'doing so will reveal certain patterns in this ordering work of hoteliers, tour operators, incoming agents, guides, airlines and the like. These patterns reflect not only the way they define tourism, but also how they perform it and the way in which they align people and things in order to make a difference' (Ibid.: 109). However, practical considerations often make it impossible to literally, constantly and simultaneously following objects and people at the destination. Instead, specific and local practices may be observed and described through their taking place at selected sites, whether on web pages, in newspapers or travelogues, in the restaurant or on the walking street. In order to follow this, close and highly contextual ethnographic descriptions of local actors and processes are needed. The descriptive combination of practices not only seeks to incorporate local tourism practices on place, but also the production of narratives and knowledge on tourism as well as the research methods and analytical grips used to collect and describe them.

Studying constant working and doing entails a close investigation of the material composition, the discursive ordering and the enactments of the destination. Empirical investigation is essential to establish the workings and orderings of the network in which specific focus is given to how humans, non-humans, discourses and technologies are ordered and translated in the network. The importance, both empirical and analytical, of certain categories, phenomena, people, objects or actions can not be established prior to the examination of the network. It is through the empirical examination of the relations between different actors, that their effect, importance and ability to speak, act, define and represent can be established. It is the results of such investigations, but also the lack of results and the inability to investigate, which are presented in the following.

During my fieldwork in Zakopane, a range of techniques were deployed as preliminary interviews, Internet, tourist office and library searches as well as participant observations led on to other activities, informants,

²⁵ Appadurai (1986) has undertaken a similar approach in which he suggest to follow things around in order to describe, for instance, how their status shifts as they move from commodities to gifts to resources as they circulate through various sites.

places and things, a journalistic version of which could be recollected in the opening of this chapter. In the present work, interviews and observations are combined with material from web page material, tourism brochures and historical and biographical accounts. All connected into an ethnographical description of how the destination comes together. As a result of this eclectic approach, the written and internet sources, the observations and the interviews on Zakopane are highly diverse and point in many directions. In an attempt to provide an overview - although this might not comply with the quest for the heterogeneous otherwise undertaken in the present work - I will attempt in the following to first separate three categories or types of sources as the *material*, the *discursive* and the *enacted* and then demonstrate how these work as an integral part of the study and construction of the destination.

Delimiting and integrating field material. Materiality, discourse and enactment

To claim that tourism is full of things is hardly a startling statement - or a controversial one for that matter. However, elements of tourism covered by the term 'things' are often seen as backdrops or accessories to what is conceived of as more relevant, strictly social matters of study within tourism research: 'Here is a paradox. Tourism abounds with things, tourist things, and tourists are tied up in a world of tourist things for a considerable period of their time. And yet, if you read all the past and current textbooks on tourism...you will discover that these things are not held to be very significant...tourist things tend to be significant only in what they represent; as a meaningful set of signs and metaphors' (Franklin, 2003: 97, in Haldrup and Larsen 2006). Tourism materiality is seen as a tool, a product to be sold, a means to an(other) end: the development, marketing, branding, management or selling of products, sites and destinations (Ren, forthcomingB).

The socio-material sensitivity found in ANT constitutes a dare to the primary status of the social in the investigation of tourism, which also challenged the visual in the cultural tourism literature and its clear separation between the social world and things 'surrounding it' (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006). A socio-material perspective affects the way we study and analyse tourism as a phenomenon in describing how the material interact with, shape and work within and upon the social. Integrating the material side of tourism in our interrogations and analysis provides us with a new perspective on how tourism is organised and performed. The relations and workings of the socio-material aspects of tourism heavily contribute to its shaping. Artefacts, technologies, discourses, practices and spaces supplement, or even defy, 'traditional' fields of study (and explanatory constructs) such as culture, socio-economic structures or human agency. As part of a methodology more sensitive to tourism materiality, the socio-material descriptions of how the destination is organised and constructed challenge how we perceive tourism and undertake its study.

The material, however, never stands alone. It must be related to other entities and practices to gain strength and to act, hereby keeping the network strong and stabile. In this process, materiality is supplemented or rather connected to *discursive practices* within various modes of ordering. Through these, certain ideas and practices are processed and integrated (van der Duim 2007), for instance by deploying certain tourism offers and services, technologies, architectural or musical styles rather than others (as displayed in chapter 7, 8

and 9). In order to create stability within the network, different modes of ordering and their matching conditions of possibility are combined with other different modes of ordering. Law argues, that 'a series of different ordering modes – which might indeed in some circumstances actually be in conflict with one another – may interact to perform a series of materials and material arrangements that have hierarchical and distributional effects' (Ibid.:25). This enables handling disparate realities: 'every discourse sets limits to its conditions of possibility so it cannot recognise certain kinds of realities. But those realities exist and they have to be handled.' (Law 2007:10). Since a problematic mode of ordering could easily be replaced with a more efficient one, stability is secured - at least temporarily - through *multi-discursive ordering* (Law 1996). As was also seen with the quotes on the destination deployed in chapter 2, this shows that order and strength exist not *in spite of*, but partly *because* of the non-human materiality and technologies (Callon & Latour 1981). It is through its hybridity and heterogeneous, not its homogeneity, that the network is kept together and strong: 'Strength does not come from concentration, purity and unity, but from dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties' (Latour 1996:2). The temporary stabilising of the socio-material and discursive expressions and working of the network take place through the establishing of hierarchies and mechanisms of distribution. At the destination, these are manifest in various discourses and materialities but also in a multiplicity of practices and enactments, which will now be addressed.

Perceiving the destination as multiple (Mol 2002) not only entails looking at its rich and heterogeneous materiality or its different modes of ordering, but also into its *enactment*²⁶ in which it enters 'in the different sets of relations and contexts of practice.' (Ibid.:342). Termed the ontological turn, this view of ANT implies a move away from perspectivism, i.e. multiple perspectives to multiple objects/realities. Rather than 'dialectically jumping between the ideas that reside in the minds of subjects and some objective reality out there' (Ibid.:31), Mol suggests rather focusing on the precarious *practices* of our everyday life made up of both bodies, discourses and objects in specific relation and context.

In relation to the destination, this lack of singularity on an ontological level and in everyday practices heavily contradicts and challenges the managerial approach to the destination (or tourism in general) in which people, objects and situations are often predicted, framed and 'diagnosed' in order to calculate, control and manage a given reality. Similarly, the branding and marketing of the destination is based on the idea of one destination from which an image or identity essence must be extracted and conveyed as the real destination. Both undertakings are carried out through a methodological version of auditing (Law 2004:6) in which standards and regularities 'try to orchestrate themselves hegemonically into purported coherence' (Ibid.: 6). The descriptions of this thesis defy such hegemonic understandings of both reality and research methods. It does so in seeking to (partially) communicate the instability and the contradictions stemming from the constant assembling and enacting of the destination. The material, the discursive and the enactment of the destination encompass three ways of studying the destination. However, and drawing from some of the

²⁶ According to Law, the notion of enactment is used as a necessary replacement for performance because its connotations within theatre and generally seen as linked and applied to human conduct (Law 2004:159).

above sections, these understandings of the destination are also themselves modes of ordering, methodic instruments making it possible to describe, to make sense and ultimately to know.

Lost in translation or a novel reading?

In this final section, I try to provide an account of how the observation and collection of descriptions were made possible, also touching on some of the limitations and shortcomings which lead from it. I account for how the fieldwork was practically organised and carried out, but also why I decided to use Zakopane as the field for my investigation. This wish is based on a number of questions, which have recurrently been posed by informants and fellow scholars.

A first, highly relevant question often posed to me and my project concerned how I, in no way an expert on Polish or Górale culture, society or history, had imagined undertaking such an investigation. The question was posed either curiously, with fascination or with a hint of disbelief or criticism. Certainly, one could easily point to and criticise the fact that my scant Polish language skills sometimes prevented me from following local newspaper or public debates in detail or carrying out interviews myself²⁷. For a non-Polish speaker, unfamiliar with more detailed facts on Polish history, politics and culture, taking on research in Poland might seem as a truly daunting, even daring task. From such a perspective, one might fairly ask what made me venture to this exact locality.

It was a master course at the Department of Ethnology at the University of Copenhagen on the Eastern enlargement of the European Union in 2004 which initially paved the way to my exploration of Denmark's large South-Eastern neighbour; first through the course curriculum and later on, by a study trip to Warsaw and Cracow finishing off with a daytrip to Zakopane and the surrounding areas of Podhale. On the arrival to Zakopane, I was drawn to the striking and fascinating contrast of mass tourism and folk culture which in intriguing ways seemed to interact, merge and feed from each other and yet also be hermetically sealed in some place and situations. Such division was the case with the 'wedding ceremony' (mentioned also in the article excerpt in chapter 3) in which the Danish students and teachers participated (or at least observed with great curiosity and wonder) from the back of a horse drawn carriage. This staged wedding was both a traditional ritual celebrating the coming of Spring, while possibly (and only possibly, as it was never fully explained to me in spite of many later attempts to unravel it) also being a metaphorical and ironic celebration

²⁷ Although it must be stated that most people, especially those working in the tourist industry, did speak and agreed to be interviewed in English. In cases where interviews could not be carried out in English, two Polish anthropology students from nearby Cracow would conduct the interviews I would not attend these interviews simply because I deemed it to be potentially confusing with a third companion. The interviews were carried out after conversations with the students on the objectives and goals of the specific interview and after jointly going through and supplementing my initial proposal for an interview guide. Having familiarised themselves quite well with the project the student were given 'free hands' during the interviews and were encouraged to supplement the interview guide with other relevant questions. One interview was even performed after my departure because of lack of time and conflicting schedules. It must be said that a few informants were surprised, one even slightly offended by me not participating in the interview, which were often arranged through other informants, through secretaries or by the students. This would give rise to annoyance by the students, They, and I along with them, would express frustration over their lack of authority which would also be seen in occasional difficulties in gaining access when I could not take part, such as on the telephone- although I am not sure that my own participation would have been that much more authoritative!.

of the 'alliance' between Poland and Europe, which was being set in place in the days when Poland was accepted into the European Union.

The singing, the costumes, the drunkards in the last wagon wrapped in EU flags, the intricate route through villages surrounding Zakopane in which people were welcomed with vodka and flower decorated triumphant arches and the ending on a field. These performances were a mystery to us all in strict ethnographical term: 'What are they doing?', 'why are they doing it?', 'what is the purpose?'. But I remember *also* thinking: 'where are the tourists?'. Why, in this area so dependent on and filled with tourists, were no tourists present at this ostentatious display, which many visitors to the region - Poles and foreigners alike – would most likely have perceived (as we did) as very 'authentic' or as a genuine and memorable 'experience'. How was this intricate process of cultural separation, division and association enabled and how were these 'operated'? In my eyes, the event might easily have been supplemented with the possibility of selling some of the food products and hand craft objects already present at the setting. So why not²⁸? Similar thoughts would later cross my mind many times during my fieldwork when attending other events which I thought could very easily have included tourists. But initially, this was the situation and occurrence which later made me return to Zakopane.

Looking back, I am glad that I did not let my lack of local contacts and Polish language skills keep me away. Reading about and hearing of other's experiences with fieldworks, it is clear that practical implications and problems are always a part of fieldwork - whether one sees oneself as far from (Malinowski 2001) or very close to (Modan 2007) the field under investigation. Access is somehow *always* restricted, moderated or otherwise sanctioned to a field, whether because of age, nationality, gender, race, family relations, language or other skills (such as musical skills as described by Colley 2005). Based on this realisation, I apply a *pragmatic* understanding to fieldwork in which its conducting is based on a set of problems, empirically grounded, inter-subjective and well reflected on its limitation and consequences (White 1999). As for questions of whether meaning would not get lost in translation when using intermediates to carry out some of the interviews, I can only say that most of these interviews had an 'official' and clarifying purpose and did therefore not rely on small linguistic details and peculiarities. Quite the contrary, I did sometimes feel that language was getting in the way not in the Polish interview, but sometimes in the English. Such are the inevitable and recurring entanglements of communication.

Another frequently addressed and related question addressed by people, with whom I discussed my project, concerned my ability to access the backstage - or the *kuchnia* (kitchen), as is said in Polish - of Zakopane. When I primarily addressed my questions to official tourism promoters, entrepreneurs and managers, to politicians, journalists, ethnographers, guides and local cultural personages, was I not potentially left with the official presentation of what the destination was, an explicit account of what (and who) it consisted of, what took place there and how? As Czarniawska (2007) notes about the worry of not being able to access the

²⁸ With this question I do not wish to imply that I think they *should* have invited tourists - or that they shouldn't. These questions only show how the event represented a stark contrast to other local events and situations in which cultural display and the commodification of certain cultural products went hand in hand.

'engine room', in her case of organisations, the fact that official accounts might be prepared for external use make them valuable *because* and not in spite of this fact. Also, Czarniawska 'wish[es] to challenge yet another myth behind the "how it really was"'. The private versions of insiders, unless made official or officially subversive (in the sense of a shared counter-vision), have no impact on further developments. Organizations run on official representations and semi-official gossip; idiosyncratic versions of reality are of no importance' (Ibid.:82).

As a result of the way the destination is most often marketed and managed from the top down, I believe that the organisational official or semi-official ways of representing and running things mentioned by Czarniawska also apply to the destination. This is not to say that the destination is only ordered, constructed or enacted from the office of the hotel managers, administration bureaus or tourism agencies, and even less that the official discourses are necessarily complied with or accepted in all parts of the destination network. The accounts and narratives which I collected are not seen as *either* kuchnia or front desk narratives (as one is not seen as better suited to represent the destination than the other) but rather enacted and hence efficient part of the destination creation through how they became observable to me as I moved around, participated at and described the destination.

A last question, but perhaps the most frequently asked over and over again during dinner conversations, paper presentations and other academic discussions concerned the basic 'why Poland?'. The questions puzzled me and ultimately lead me to pose myself a deriving but contrasting question, namely 'why *not* Poland?'. Why was Poland seemingly such a strange or exotic place to investigate, when it seemed to me that at least one of the ideas of tourism research was to investigate tourism places elsewhere? How was this elsewhere different from other 'elsewheres'? According to the book *Inventing Eastern Europe: The map of Civilisation in the Mind of the Enlightenment* by Wolff (1994), a certain Eastern Othering exist in the Western mindset through a mental 'mapping' of Central/Eastern European. Drawing from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (2003), Wolff traces this division or marginalisation back to the Enlightenment, where the author identifies the emergence of a certain *regard* upon the East. Where divisions had previously been identified between a civilised South and a barbaric North, this 'Western' regard gradually worked to construct Eastern Europe through a discursive Othering²⁹. This understanding and view upon the East is only gradually changing³⁰, for instance through a continuing integration of some of the former member of the Eastern block into the European Union.

Perhaps it is this discursive Othering - and its many socio-material plotters - which have led to what numerous scholars, such as Walicki (1982), Wolff (1994), Davies (2006) Calahan Schneider (2006) and Ren (2005), see as the underrepresentation of research on Poland and more widely on Eastern Europe. If

²⁹ There is a striking similarity between this regard and the gaze described in John Urrys *The Tourist gaze. Leisure and travel in contemporary Societies* (2002). Both the concept of the tourism gaze and the Western regard of the Enlightenment are used to describe how tourism or visitors visually objectify landscapes and people visited, leading to their objectification and Othering.

³⁰ Perhaps being replaced by a *regard* on the Middle East or Muslim world?

research was undertaken, as claimed by John J. Kulczycki in his article *Eastern Europe in Western Civilisation Textbooks: The example of Poland* (2005), it suffered under an, at best, one-sided focus on the Cold War, USSR and economic and geopolitical concerns. Kulczycki concludes that even today, 'Poland continues to appear in history "from time to time" [...] More than a half-century after the start of the Cold War and fifteen years after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the emphasis in Western Civilization textbook on Western Europe plus Russia remains at best merely "a pedagogical convenience". It fails to present the full panoply of the history of the Western Civilization in all its variety' (Ibid.:170). According to many, this tendency has affected scholarly as well as public knowledge of Poland in the 'West'. Although my present work is not an attempt to contribute to furthering the knowledge of Poland's role in the development of Western Civilization or 'overcoming fragmentation in the study of history' (Ibid.:154) (as I do not consider it neither possible nor desirable to overcome fragmentation), I do believe that the 'Western Civilisation' lacks understanding and knowledge about Poland as a new actor in Europe.

The above presentation of some of the questions which I encountered during these last three years of research seek to touch upon the reasons for which my research was located in Poland to start with and to highlight the difficulties, but hopefully also advantages of taking up the research as I did. It shows that research coincides with and is often (and hopefully) prompted by personal interests as well as coincidences, practicalities and other 'worldly' or unscientific matters. These merge with and are not necessarily separate (or separable) from discussions of power and Othering in knowledge creation and research. I hope to have persuaded the reader that a perceived lack of highly specialised knowledge or the shortage of a VIP pass to the gatekeepers of a field should not make us abstain from becoming engaged in an otherwise interesting place or case. Instead, as suggested by Czarniawska, this lack of inside knowledge or access should be translated in the subsequent work into a *novel reading* (following DeVault 1987). This concept encompasses the contributions which an outside researcher may bring to a field. A novel reading is 'an account from a person who is not socialized into the same system of meaning, but is familiar enough with it to recognize its objects. It may therefore vary from a standard account of the same event and provide new insights - a "meaning added"' (Czarniawska 2007:81). What I perceive as my novel reading is not only one of Zakopane, which may said to have been the object of a small library of primarily Polish writings (see the front picture of chapter 4 for an illustration of just a fractions of the guides books and ethnographical accounts published on Zakopane and Podhale). It is rather a new enactment, a new version, of the destination. Altogether, this description of the construction and workings of the destination of Zakopane hopefully comes together as a novel reading.

Hopefully, this chapter has made clear that my quest is not to describe *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* - how things *are*, how the social *is*. As such, the destination of Zakopane is not seen as a representative case of best practices³¹. Neither, however, is it an idiosyncratic description of Zakopane, as some of the practices and enactments may also be transferred to other destinations. Rather, the present work is a description of

³¹ According to Law (1994) representations must be treated 'in the same way as other stories. Representations are not just a necessary part of ordering. Rather, 'they are *ordering processes in their own right*' (Ibid.:26).

how actors, i.e. the people, things and practices constructing the destination, perform and account for others and how this takes place through various practices, translations and orderings within the network. Through the combination of interviews, observations and participation in my fieldwork, I sought, as shown in the above, to follow how actors – either by themselves or appointed by others – connected to and affected the destination. I sought to investigate how status and behaviour was negotiated, how practices were endorsed or rendered difficult and how this was carried out within the destination network. Classifying and labelling people, things and practices as traditional, commercial, ‘cool’, part of a communist past or innovative present were all part of this multi-discursive ordering of the destination.

Chapter 4

The research and the hinterland – a selected literature review



'If new realities "out-there" and new knowledge of those realities "in-here" are to be created, then practices that can cope with a hinterland of pre-existing social and material realities also have to be built up and sustained. I call the enactment of this hinterland and its bundle of ramifying relations a "method assemblage"'
(Law 2004:13)

The undertakings of this thesis are based on a number of considerations regarding and associations to the theoretical understanding and methodological enactments which have been accounted for in the two previous chapters. There is however also another crucial area which interacts with and has affected the undertakings and outcome of this PhD process, namely tourism research. Following Law (2004), tourism research is a *hinterland*, in which method assemblage takes place as 'a combination of reality detector and reality amplifier' (Law 2004:14). This field of research has only been briefly addressed in the former chapters due to which a more detailed outline is now called for to situate my own research. The very broad and diverse character of tourism research, and the deliberate concern of not ordering the world into large purified blocks, explains why I have chosen in this present chapter, as in the theoretical and methodological accounts in the previous two, to cut out, present and confront a selected, or assembled, version of tourism research.

In the following, I will show how tourism studies, like other fields of research and knowledge creation seek to 'detect, resonate with and amplify particular patterns of relations in the excessive and overwhelming fluxes of the real (ibid.14). In order to clarify my own position and elucidate how this challenges and yet is rooted within a hinterland, I will seek to enact my own and selected *method assemblage*. In this attempt to situating my research, I will provide the reader with perspectives on a handful of different fields of research which converge in this study. In these research field outlines, I wish to present and discuss the generated types of knowledge of each field and demonstrate in what ways these knowledges relate to my own investigation. It is not my intention to provide the reader with an exhaustive introduction to these fields. Instead it is my aim, through a very partial and selective account, to specify how and in what way these areas may be identified as interweaving and conflicting with my own theoretical and analytical approach to the destination. As opposed to an understanding in which the field of tourism research is perceived as divided, I will seek in this chapter to perform a relational reading of selected fields of knowledge. By pointing to their interconnectivity and by recognising these fields as part of this present work, I seek to unite commonly separated entities into a new way of researching and enacting the destination.

An outline of research and knowledge in various corners of tourism

For the purpose of contextualising and hopefully substantiating my own approach, I will introduce different research areas which, I argue, assist in scientifically embedding the study of the destination. The research areas included in this account are *tourism research*, *cultural studies*, *destination branding* and *intercultural communication in tourism*. It will be described how these different research fields offer a variety of guidelines to how a research objects may be conceptualised and studied. In this process, these areas of research also provide practitioners with recommendations on how to apply and make use of their specific knowledge

through different channels such as marketing, management and branding of the destination. Hence, these areas of study not only create a way to study the destination. They may also be seen as a way of ordering realities 'out-there'. As a hinterland, they provide ontological and epistemological groundings to study and know the destination by offering various approaches as to *what* to study and *how* to understand, to know, to see and to work upon the destination. In the following I will seek to address some of these ways of studying and knowing in and of tourism.

Tourism research. Division and connection

Embarking on a research project such as a PhD involves a familiarization with the extensive field of tourism research. *What* is there to be known about tourism and *how* is tourism known in tourism research? Seeing tourism research as a highly multidisciplinary field of study consolidated by a (somewhat) collective subject matter rather than a specific approach or theoretical orientation, this section seeks to interrogate some predominant research approaches and perspectives on tourism. Through this investigation, I seek to investigate *what types of knowledge about tourism exist in this field* and *how they are produced*. As noted by many tourism scholars, presenting or understanding *tourism research* as one homogenous mass is a mistake. Rather, it should be conceived as a plethora of multidisciplinary research³² gathered under the wings of two competing paradigms. Departing from and presenting this view of division, I proceed by arguing that tourism research should instead be seen as *fractionally coherent* (Law 2002).

Division

Many tourism scholars have asserted that tourism is not a discipline, but rather a field of studies centred on a common object or base, namely tourism (Tribe 2004). When looking into the epistemological discussions in tourism, a striking feature is the perception of tourism research as a divided, almost entrenched field of study. In the article *Knowing about tourism. Epistemological issues* (2004), John Tribe argues that in spite of much literature placing tourism under a single entity called tourism studies, 'this approach does not adequately reflect the tensions within tourism studies. Rather, there seem to be (at least) two fields of study discernible' (Ibid.:49). Tribe identifies the first as tourism business studies (management, corporate strategy, marketing). The other field he broadly labels as 'little more than just the rest of tourism studies, or non-business tourism studies' (Ibid.:49). In addition to business or non-business objectives in research, a division is commonly identified in the application of qualitative versus quantitative methods and through the scientific aspiration to instrumentalise as opposed to interpret the object of study³³.

This notion of division clearly underlies many researchers' perception of and working within the field of tourism. It is diffused and propagated in articles and books on tourism epistemology (Echtner & Jamal 1997,

³² For a critical discussion of tourism as *one* field of research see Tribe (1997, 2004). For a critical discussion of this 'divide' based on a understanding of tourism research and knowledge construction as an actor-network, see Ren, Morgan and Pritchard (forthcoming)

³³ This division is similar to the one identified by Framke (2002) and Ringer (1998) between the measuring and the interpretation of the destination presented in chapter 2.

Ateljevic et al. 2007, Tribe 1997, 2004)³⁴, is observable in the division of tourism research into different faculties and departments and is reproduced in the educational system favouring disciplinary separation. Also, it is performed and articulated at tourism research meetings and conferences³⁵. The business oriented neo-positivist paradigm is said to dominate tourism research in terms of research funding, staff and publications (Ateljevic et al. 2007). This paradigm is predominantly based on a methodology deploying large amounts of statistical data accumulated through close-end questionnaires, content analysis or testing panels, and quantitative analyses of various data material. The research aim is to develop and improve tools with which tourism may better be managed and streamlined, measured and evaluated, and made profitable (Tribe 2004). It is the paradigm most commonly associated with research dissemination and applicability within the tourism industry. For that, and other reasons stated in the above, it is often conceived as the core or 'inside' of tourism research.

The neo-positivist paradigm is complemented or, according to some, opposed by a constructivist or interpretive paradigm based on the qualitative collection and interpretation of specific and non-replicable places, events or phenomena. As also stated by Ringer (1998) in chapter 2, its aim is to offer unique and non-representational descriptions of a broad range of tourism cultures and tourism related experiences, spaces or social institutions. Within this paradigm, the aim is not to operationalise, but rather to reach a better or fuller understanding of its social, cultural, political or psychological sides. According to Ateljevic et al. (2007) this paradigm and its research may be conceived as marginal, or as an outside or challenging perspective.

Connection

From the above account of the field of tourism as divided into two opposing paradigms, one might assume the tourism community and its production of knowledge as highly disassociate. Is it even correct to speak of *one* tourism research community? In the next, I will propose to look at the tourism research field as a collective network and an entity, which in spite of its heterogeneity remains connected through a range of heterogeneous and socio-material practices. Hereby I seek to further the view introduced in the previous chapter of research practices, knowledges and realities as related. I do so by conflating seemingly incohesive or conflicting tourism research practices into an entity comprised of fractional coherence, in which standards, compromises and intellectual innovations are locally negotiated (Michael 1996:46).

In a relational and socio-material approach, knowledge is perceived as a heterogeneous, complex and socio-material product rather than something generated through the operation of a privileged scientific method

³⁴ Similar articles are to be found in the even more specific tourism research areas of heritage tourism, sustainable tourism, sports tourism etc. See Jamal & Kim (2005), Sharpley (2000) and Gibson (1998).

³⁵ My own experience of this 'sense of division' stems from a number of tourism research conferences, in which paradigms were questioned and research values were problematized following what could crudely be termed as a qualitative/interpretive vs. quantitative/neo-positivist divide.

(Latour & Woolgar 1979). Knowledge may be seen as a product or an effect of a network of heterogeneous materials taking shape in and through teaching, conference presentations, publications or grant applications. It is enacted, embodied and reproduced through the skills of teachers, researchers or students. This understanding offers an alternative to seeing occurrences as detached or as pulling in opposite directions. It provides new descriptions of powerful and knowledge-generating positions, not only explaining incongruence as a struggle between an inside and an outside. It invites us to seeing knowledge generating entities as part of and as continuously working within a larger network constantly generating, negotiating and stabilising the tourism research body, the 'what and how to know' of tourism research.

This does not mean however that there is only one or a few ways of knowing in tourism. A relational approach denies both the existence of one collective body of knowledge as a constant and homogeneous entity and the airtight separation of two conflicting incommensurable ways of doing research. It demonstrates that 'notwithstanding the coordinations of the many strategies for coordination, the strain toward the single is counterbalanced by the heterogeneity of multiplicity (Law 2000:18). There never is, and can never be uncontested knowledge. In order to work, a network such as that of tourism research must be able to accommodate a variety of entities, a multiplicity and complexity of knowledges and practices. By demonstrating the ongoing processes of coordination and logics of ordering as well as the juxtaposing of images and elements of different narrations and the different links between them, Law points to the fact that knowing is not a singular activity. Instead, he draws attention to the prospect that there will always be different and valid knowledge that can neither be entirely reconciled, nor dismissed.

As shown, the body of tourism research may be addressed as separated into two fields of research, a viewpoint which is responded to and felt by many of its scholars³⁶. However, it may also be conceptualised as a collective network of fractional coherence, in which highly diverse knowledges and ways of knowing engage in a collective assembling and enacting of tourism research and of its objects of study. The effects of knowledge may be studied through their social materialisation, in universities and colleges, research centres, on electronic research bulletin boards, call for papers, books and as in this present case, in a PhD dissertation investigating the tourism destination. As such, this thesis works as an actor in the tourism research network, simultaneously challenging and certifying its authority and knowledge. At the same time, it is itself put to work as it is ordered and translated, in complying with standards, being reviewed, (hopefully!) approved and authorised by various boards, presented at conferences, circulated in publications and communicated in teaching. Hence, considered as a collective, but heterogeneous entity tourism research works to produce specific knowledges of what tourism is and how it may be studied. In this way, both business-oriented and socio-culturally oriented approaches work together in affirming (although in different ways) not just *what* and *how* tourism is, but also that it *is* - as a separate and important category and field of study, a field worth researching.

³⁶ I have heard (and myself expressed) this feeling of division many times, for instance during tourism conferences and PhD seminars.

Culture in tourism research

“The currency of cultural tourism is difference”
(Evans-Pritchard 1989)

The approach of this thesis is inscribed into what is known as cultural tourism research. This is how it is addressed when categorised or presented when put into conference streams. It is the reference I shortly provide colleagues with when asked and the basis on which I am asked to teach tourism and cultural students. According to the above section on paradigmatic division, this subfield working with the socio-cultural aspects of tourism would be positioned on the fringe of tourism research. As part of an interpretive paradigm, cultural tourism research is addressed by its supporters as a challenger to the claimed epistemic dominance of the neo-positivist paradigm in tourism research. This is supported by Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan (2007) in their article *Decentring Tourism’s Intellectual Universe or Traversing the Dialogue Between Change and Tradition* in which they claim that ‘critical and interpretative modes of tourism inquiry still have much to do if they are to truly decentre the tourism academy and secure a paradigmatic shift in tourism scholarship and theory’ (Ibid.:11).

Cultural tourism research might however also itself be critically challenged for setting up a number of assumptions regarding culture and the relation between culture and tourism as I shall try to show in the following. I argue that one assumption relates to seeing culture as a fixed substance, as an *essence*. Culture is encompassed as something ‘out there’ and attributed to different individuals or groups. Hence, culture becomes a thing which is taken as a starting point and which may be observed and subsequently used to explain the field of study. Secondly, I show how the relation of this notion of culture to tourism is also linked to an understanding of culture as *difference* in which the identification and localization of cultural difference is set in a spatial frame, where distantly located cultures are also perceived as more remote in a cultural sense (Liburd & Ren 2009). The assumptions of culture as essence and difference, also retrieved in tourism branding and intercultural communication as I demonstrate later on, are grounded in seemingly opposing notions of culture of *sameness* and *difference*³⁷. After critically addressing these notions, I propose seeing culture as a *strategic tool* and an *effect* deployed and created as part of the workings of tourism.

Culture as sameness and difference

Culture is etymologically derived from the Latin word ‘cultura’, meaning to cultivate, grow or nurture. The idea of cultivation is retrieved in a concept of culture in which all humans are considered equal and in the possession, at least theoretically, of the same abilities to grow and evolve. Culture is here a unified and universal human project and property. This concept of Culture is retrieved in the universalist legitimising of the nation (Orchard 2002:429) retrieved in documents such as the bill of Human Rights, the French

³⁷ Also encompassed as the universal and romantic notions of culture. Although very distinct connotations can be drawn from the definition of the concept of culture in French, German and English philosophy (Fink 1988), or according to a Western or Eastern European tradition (Cordell 2000), these two specific notions are particularly relevant in the context of tourism.

Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme and the American Declaration of Independence. These documents reflect the principles of equality, justice for all and one united culture of mankind. According to the Enlightenment project, humanity must jointly strive towards a common civilisation in a fight against prejudice and ignorance.

At the time of the Enlightenment, another concept of culture gained ground as an opposition to the notion of universal Culture. Although this concept could also be said to be inspired from its Latin origins of *cultura*, more attention was laid on the connection between soil and culture and on the relation between the physical place and growth. This understanding of cultures as mutually disparate and incommensurable is first identified as an ideology of diversity in the writings of German philosopher Johan Herder (Knudsen 1998:73). His ideas of cultural particularism and *Volkgeist*, the spirit of the people, can be seen as a protest against the universalistic notion of Culture of the Enlightenment. Culture was claimed to be not a universal feature, but rather determined by *Blut und Boden*, by place of birth and origins. Not based on the idea of human equality, this romantic perception of cultures rather than Culture based its ideas on human disparity and the uniqueness of particular cultures (Hauschild 1997:746).

The ability of differentiating cultures is based on a notion of cultural relativism according to which different cultures are bound to remain exactly that: different. According to Søren Christensen (1996), cultural relativism seeks to demonstrate, how 'there are different cultures, that cultural diversity should be understood in terms of a plurality of lifeworlds, each displaying its proper meaning and coherence. In this sense cultural relativism is not a certain benevolent attitude towards cultures, but rather a discursive construct, transforming the disorder of cultural diversity into a well-ordered plurality of collective systems of values, that is "culture"' (Ibid.:134). Cultures are incommensurable, can not be transcended or integrated. As cultures are identified as different, cultural contact may result in serious conflicts because of a basic but essential lack of cultural compatibility.

The conceptual establishment of cultural differences can not be solely ascribed to the particularist project of Herder and the romantic thinkers of his time. In tracing the cultural foundation behind the notions of universalism and particularism, anthropologist Fabienne Knudsen (1998) claims that the interest in and worshipping of diversity inspired by Herder must be seen as a logical extension of the establishment of human unity provided by the Enlightenment (Ibid.:76). Culture is perceived as a universal project of progress and change. The history of mankind is seen as driven by internal dynamics of development and necessary progress (Knudsen 1998:74). In this evolutionistic image, cultural differences are also identified, but in another way than with the particularist approach. Here, different societies are positioned in relation to a scale of values based on criteria of difference going from simple to complex. It is the different positions *in scale* of development, not the cultural difference *in itself* that is seen as the source of misconceptions. Thinkers of the Enlightenment were greatly interested in differences, resulting among other things in a number of popular travel books and accounts. In that sense, the ideas of universalism and particularism are not only each others opposites, but also a relational and interconnected pair. In spite of their different positions both

approaches end up ascribing stable properties to culture, whether universal or culturally relative. In both perspectives, universalist Culture and particularist cultures are identified by collecting a set of objective, unchanging features. Hence, both notions appear as something non-negotiable, simply inherent to, and naturally extracted from an either universal or locally bound culture.

In relation to tourism, these two concepts of culture may be retrieved as underlying basis for promoting destinations either as places of difference or of sameness. When marketing a destination as unique, we apply the romantic and cultural relativistic understanding of cultures as different. In the tourism industry, this understanding of culture is supported, reproduced and reinforced in tourism brochures, travel books, and other destination promotion material in which destination cultures are frequently thematised as different, exotic and 'unlike nowhere else'. As also noted by Löfgren (1999) universal equality is substituted in particularism by a search and longing for authenticity, a project which concomitant rhetoric is easily detected in today's tourism promotion and consumption. As opposed to this, when visiting New York or London as international metropolises, we do so based on an understanding of city culture as international, universal or same. The understanding of heritage may be perceived based on both concepts. The UNESCO's world heritage list implies a universalist view on humanity as having a common heritage, a universal culture carrying relevancy to all human beings. Other heritage sites are conversely seen as distinctive part of a local, and to us alien and unfamiliar, culture. In spite of both notions prevailing in the field of tourism, culture in tourism is more commonly perceived and subsequently marketed as something inherent and strictly related to a distinct local, regional or national culture. This is why we travel – in search of difference and otherness in unfamiliar customs, strange foods and exotic people (Hollinshead & DeBurlos 1992).

A consequence of conceptualising or making implicitly assumptions about culture in terms of difference in cultural tourism research, whether stemming from particularism or universalism, is the encompassing of tourism encounters in terms of cultural clash, conflict or misconceptions. Cultures are described as incompatible or unequal, as confronted or otherwise differentiated in various tourism situations³⁸. An example of cultural scholarship investigating tourism and culture in terms of clashes is the book *Coping with tourists. European Reactions to Mass Tourism* (Boissevain 1996). The volume investigates how 'individuals and communities dependent on the presence of tourists cope with the commodification of their culture and the constant attention of outsiders' (Ibid.:1). Editor Jeremy Boissevain introduces the book by describing the strategies undertaken by locals in order to protect private areas and zones increasingly sought after by tourists on the look-out for authentic experiences. The strategies of protecting so-called back regions include actions such as covert resistance, hiding, ritual, organised protest and aggression. Hence, the local and the outside are encompassed as opposite and potentially conflicting. This understanding is retrieved in Kariel and Kariel's *Socio-cultural impacts of Tourism: An Example from the Austrian Alps* (1982) in which tourism is seen to act 'as a vector, or carrier in the epidemiological sense, of the urban-technological culture to the agrarian mountain communities, which were formerly more isolated, and contributes to the diffusion of new

³⁸ As an illustration, a search on www.scholar.google.com provided 23100 hits on the three-word combination of 'culture', 'clash' and 'tourism'. The search was conducted on June 30th 2008.

ideas and technology' (Ibid.:1). These and many other works testify not only to the fact that tourism create what is identified and explained as cultural clashes, but also that these clashes are most often seen as culturally rooted and based on an understanding of cultures as incommensurably different. An example of a way of *not* explaining these clashes as purely cultural is found in *Hosts and Guests. The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977). In the introduction to this seminal work edited by Valene Smith, the author highlights that the 'two major bases for conflict and stress appear to be economic and social' (Ibid.:4).

Culture as strategy and effect

In the above it was shown how culture in tourism research is often connected to an understanding of it as *difference*. Differences are identified between hosts and guests, developers and preservationists, locals and outsiders and labelled as cultural. Clashes are either explained as the workings of immanent cultural structures or understood as the result of directed, intentional human action. Rather than taking culture as the starting point, I propose in the following to see culture as a strategic tool as well as an effect deployed and created within and through the workings of the destination network.. A relational and socio-material network approach is applied as a tool in an attempt to transcend the culturalisation of the field of cultural tourism research and the *stare on difference* blinding other views and muting other understandings of the roles and workings of culture. This approach does not recognise the existence of immanent differences or inherent mismatches between people and groups. Instead it focuses on tracing how culture is used and put to work ultimately seeking to describe the processes of ordering through which culture appears and materialises to the eye of the beholder – for instance as positions of difference. This is done through descriptions of how a variety of discourses, individuals, groups, artefacts and practices are labelled or identified as 'cultural' or related to culture as they connect to and are ordered within the destination actor-network.

Taking culture as an analytical point of departure may very easily result in a juxtapositions between individuals or groups already identified as incommensurable or unequal. As a way to avoid the apprehension of culture as pre-given in the structuring of the analysis, this thesis advances an understanding of culture and the identification of cultural differences as constructed through various processes and practices within a heterogeneous tourism network. As opposed to studying cultures as founded in difference, or as a natural starting point for the analysis of cultural tourism, a relational and socio-material approach proposes to see culture as an entity taking part in a process of network construction, stabilisation and negotiation. Culture is seen as a stabilised, but far from fix effect of the social ordering of things, people, materials and technologies in the destination network, not as a bounded category. In this perspective, differences become an effect of an on-going social-material production, not as an inherent or fundamental feature linked to culture. This approach means not assuming differences as the root to cultural misconceptions or clashes, but rather as an on-going product of network translation (Ren forthcoming).

The relational network approach challenges the notion of culture as an autonomous and pure category of study (Michael 1996) also defying culture's role as a primary reason and explanation for studying it within cultural tourism studies. It also takes on more traditional ways of perceiving the workings, meanings and

roles of culture in tourism. It is asserted that the material cannot be empirically or analytically disentangled from the social (Law 1999) but should be included with equal right into the study of phenomena or notions, which we claim to be of a strictly social character - such as tourism. The approach represents a challenge to the knowledge production of cultural tourism research in its anti-essentialist and relational stance to culture. In relation to cultural tourism research, the socio-material approach breaks down preconceptions of what culture - or other categories under investigation – is or does or how they are delimited or constructed. A broad variety of components termed as 'natural', 'non-social' or 'non-human' are included into the analysis of what is mostly seen and described as purely 'cultural' in order to demonstrate the complexities of tourism and one of its most prominent features, that of the destination. Hence traditional dichotomies such as visitor/visited, guest/ host, authentic/fake or everyday life/vacationing are appointed with new relational positions through symmetrical analysis of heterogeneous entities.

Destination branding

A thesis on the destination must necessarily address issues and concepts connected to destination branding, a subfield within place marketing. This growing field is engaged with creating brand values putting emphasis on place as an untapped branding opportunity (Morgan et al. 2004). Destination branding is an instrumental and business oriented approach in so far that the place is seen as a resource and the brand as a tool to tap it in order to gain market advantages. However, it is also a discipline which addresses issues of place identity. In the following I first show how destination branding requires and presupposes a possibility of manipulating and controlling the branding process but also, secondly, how it is connected to ideas of core values, personality or identity of the place. Although I demonstrate that these two undertakings are contradictory, I recognised branding as a tool in constructing and conveyed the destination, not through an efficient and unambiguous communication strategy, but rather through ongoing, heterogeneous and incohesive processes.

Controlling branding

In the article *Meeting the destination branding challenge* (2004), Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard identify a five level pyramid, through which the destination brander may assert the destinations personality. According to the authors, place marketers must reflect the following questions: 'What are the tangible, verifiable, objective, measurable characteristics of this destination?' (level 1), 'What benefits to the tourist result from the destination's features?' (level 2), 'What psychological rewards or emotional benefits do tourists receive by visiting this destination? How does the tourist feel?' (level 3) and 'What is the essential nature and character of the destination brand?' (level 4)' (Ibid.:71). In order to answer these questions, the authors describe how branders must gain insight by asking consumers to give their opinion of the destination; what it offers and what it means to them. In a successful process, 'brand benefit pyramids sum up the consumers' relationship with a brand [...] Using the research, it should be relatively straightforward to ascertain what particular benefit pyramids customers associate with the destination in question. The benefit pyramids can be instrumental in helping to distil the essence of a destination brand's advertising proposition. This refers to the point at which consumer's wants and the destination's benefit and features intersect; any

communication (through advertising or public relations) should then encapsulate the spirit of the brand' (Ibid.:70f).

The above description prescribes how to gain or create knowledge about the destination as an assessable and accessible entity. In doing so, a certain number of things and qualities are presumed about the social world. A first and crucial one is the understanding of place identity, personality or culture as objectively observable, identifiable and controllable. In the quote, it is not the identity or place themselves from which the essence are distilled or the spirit is encapsulated, but rather the advertising proposition and the brand. There remains however in the process of brand construction a pronounced connection between the place (destination) and a final product (the brand) based on investigations of 'objective characteristics' (level 1). The brand is not claimed to be a random creation of fantasy, imagination or wishful thinking. It is a product of a research process seeking to create a powerful and credible brand based on and subtracted from the identity of the destination. As also stated in the above, the identity is not only determined based on verifiable characteristics, but is also identified through an investigation of customer behaviour. Hence, customers' views upon, feelings about or interpretations of the place are intermingled or aligned with the destinations 'objective' characteristics.

Although complexity is often acknowledged as a part of the branding process in branding textbooks, branding rests on a functionalist understanding of communication. The communication process in destination branding is concerned with how messages and case images are controlled, diffused to, and adopted by recipients, in this case as potential tourist. Communication is mostly regarded as a *unidirectional* and *controlled action*, in which a message is transmitted from a sender to one or more receivers using one or several channels of communication (TV or radio advertisement, brochures, web pages). The aim is to secure an unperturbed message transmission reducing 'noise' to a minimum (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004). It is this functionalist model of communication which in a destination branding perspective leads to the appreciation of the communication of 'one clear image' and to the concern of keeping core values down to a comprehensible few. Hence, the basic idea is that a clear image can 'hit' recipients in today's information society in a more efficient way than a fuzzier or more complex image.

According to branding theory, marketers can ensure that the image sent is the same as the one received if transmission noise is eliminated. Also, the image can be crafted by extracting and conveying a cultural identity. This is criticised by an interactionist approach to communication claiming that images, as all other communication, are context related and subject to subjective or cultural 'translations' (Askehave & Norlyk 2006). Images never contain an essence accessible and understandable to all in the same way (Solomon et al. 2006). As a consequence, there can never be *one* image. The functionalist approach also assumes that communication is a simple process of passing on a message. This is contested by research suggesting that communication is not a one-way delivery of information but rather a process involving a multiplicity of actors, artefacts, and technologies, as well as cultural, social and individual competences (Solomon et al. 2006). According to these interactionist approaches to communication (e.g. Blumer 1969, Fisher 1978),

communication can not be reduced to the transmission of simple messages, because messages (or transmissions) are never 'simple'. Before I address this issue of controlling the complexity of the brand, I will first introduce a second aspect of branding, namely its use of the notion of place identity.

Branding identity as place related

In order to secure and/or produce 'a consistent, focused communication strategy' the process of destination branding must also include and convey a notion of identity (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:147). This is done by tying the place brand to a (positive) local identity. According to Hague and Jenkins (2005), an idea of the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place, often underpins the idea of place identity. This spirit implies 'essential natural characteristics that identify a place' which become observable through certain visual qualities. Hence, identity is associated to a material basis, i.e. the place and physical space of the destination (Pritchard & Morgan 2001). According to branding literature, place identity must ideally be implemented simultaneously into the local community and promoted towards tourists in order to secure a stringent and coherent relation between brand, place, and identity (Dredge & Jenkins 2003). When correctly implemented, a place brand serves the purpose of creating a sense of identity and belonging (Olins 2004) – ideally for tourists and locals alike.

This identification and objectification of place related identity connects well to the idea of controlling the process and communication of branding. In the presented understanding of tourism branding, the destination is connected to identities, tying together certain aspects of the place with (certain) people and performances. Through my fieldwork, this was illustrated by a tourism advertisement offering 'Not only a bed, but also people, life and adventure'³⁹. In this quote, a hostel in the outskirts of Zakopane promises not just an actual product or service, i.e. 'a bed', but rather a total experience through a coherent, although abstract linking of the place to people and activities. Another example of the tying together of identity and place is demonstrated in a quote from a website providing cottage rentals. According to them 'the preservation of the traditional highland culture and dialect gives the town and region a unique identity'⁴⁰. In this citation, a connection is established between the place, i.e. 'the town' – or even extended to the 'region' – and identity, a connection implicitly identified and explained by the preservation of traditional culture and dialect.

The coupling of tourism, place and identity is not only a phenomena ascribed to the industry of tourism. It may also be retrieved within tourism research, defining tourism as 'essentially a place-based phenomenon involving the production of destination identity at different scales' (Dredge & Jenkins 2003:383). In relation to place branding, some research has critically delved with how tourism representations utilise, reflect and produce identity. Undertaking an investigation of tourism representations in Wales/Cymry, Pritchard and Morgan (2001) illustrate 'how repressive and liberating historical, political and cultural discourses can be discerned in the tourism representations used in contemporary branding strategies' (Ibid.:167). The authors

³⁹ Goodbye Lenin Hostel pamphlet, collected August 2007

⁴⁰ <http://www.countrycottagesonline.com/Zakopane1.htm>

demonstrate how 'the representations used in destination marketing are not value-free expressions of a place's identity – instead they are the culmination of historical, social, economic and political processes and reveal much about the social construction of space, cultural change, identity and discourse' (Ibid.:177). In the same way, Hague and Jenkins (2005) show how 'place identity is contested and linked to power' (Ibid.:6) by showing how places - as well as identity - are embedded in sets of power relations. According to the authors, the thoroughly social character of these notions makes them subjects to negotiation and contestation. In both cases, processes of power link to identity and place in tourism and at the destination⁴¹.

Although some scholarly work has delved with connections linking tourism to different forms of power (Cheong & Miller, Morgan & Pritchard 1998, Hollingshead 1999), 'discussions of the ideological dimensions of tourism have been virtually non-existent' (Hall 1994:11 in Pritchard & Morgan 2001:169). This might be explained by the original scientific connection of tourism studies to positivist paradigms in which other research agendas have been deemed more appropriate (Pritchard & Morgan 2001). In destination branding research, the positivist paradigm reflects itself in the way the branding situation is seen and described as a controllable - and potentially foreseeable - process involving a number of subsequent steps in which the brand is conceptually developed, strategically implemented and finally quantitatively evaluated. Not only is a self-reflective positioning as research subject cancelled out from the research of this tradition; the research also makes *a priori* assumptions on notions of identity and places as stable entities to be retrieved and communicated in fully transparent and controlled ways.

The above presentation illustrates how both the tourism industry and research on the role and characteristics of identity in tourism raises a number of questions regarding the nature of the relation between tourism, place and identity production. The understanding in destination branding linking identity to place contains a number of contradictions when taking the notion of identity under scrutiny. In using place identity as a part of the branding strategy, identity is at the same time considered as an *essence* - something contained within and extractable from the place - and a *malleable entity*, subject to marketing strategies and tourist tastes. Hence, place identity is both seen as existing or as something to be created, simultaneously tapping from identity notions of essentialism and of constructivism. In the following, I use this paradox to point to an alternative understanding of identity and of its connection to branding.

Destination branding. A socio-material process

As shown, a selection of core values is deployed in destination branding through the linking of places to certain identities aiming at efficiently communicating the brand. A relational and socio-material reading sees this as a process in which discourses, practices, people and artefacts are included and excluded through ordering. By selecting place names and stories, pointing out correct behaviour and desirable ways of conduct, entities discursively and performatively position themselves and others in relation to the destination. This demonstrates that places, here as part of the destination branding, are not empty containers, into which

⁴¹ This is further interrogated in the analytical chapters, especially chapter 6 and 9.

random people, practices and objects may be placed (Crang & Thrift 2000, Murdoch 2006). Instead, they are negotiated and contested *turfs* (Modan 2007), where struggles unfold over access to space and over power to define what kind of place a given space is or what it should be. As an actor in this process of negotiation, destination branding connects to a whole range of discourses on what a place should contain and how it may be delimited in both geographical and moral terms. Hence, destination branding works to create distinctions and boundaries not only between places but also, and more importantly, between people. The process of branding acts as a tool in this struggle to define what and who are welcomed or not (Ren 2006). This fact demonstrates that branding, or the cultural communication of a tourism destination, is not an innocent enterprise⁴². They involve the distribution of power by which the place, its people and activities are physically shaped, officially represent and normatively defined.

Through a socio-material lens, the process of place branding is not a rational marketing activity, but also a process of socio-material construction taking (and making) place within a heterogeneous network. In this perspective, place is not seen as an *a priori* but rather an *ad hoc* entity. The destination does not contain pre-given or essential qualities that may be extracted from it. Instead the destination and the entities which are ordered and translated as its core values, unique personality or true identity continuously co-constitute each other as relational parts of the destination network. Also, traits of identity or culture connected to place are constructed and deployed as strategic and efficient tools in the destination construct. Hence, the identity of place appears not as a point of departure but as an ongoing, performative and negotiated part and actor in the process of constructing destination.

As seen in the above, a relational reading of the above research fields displays how these work upon and construct the research hinterland. In this final section, I introduce one last area which influences and is challenged by my understanding and research of the tourist destination, namely the field of cultural communication.

Intercultural communication in tourism

Initially, this PhD-project was proposed under a title of 'Tourism and Intercultural Communication'. This naturally inscribed the present work in this field of research. It will be argued that, similarly to cultural tourism research, intercultural communication in tourism is based on an understanding of culture as difference. Hence, the term of *inter*-cultural communication implies an inter-action (see Emirbayers critique on this notion in chapter 2) taking place between essentially different entities. As I show, much of the research is concurrently directed towards encounters and situations which are addressed as cultural. This attempt, it is claimed, is again based on cultures as different and conflicting - since it is prone to be misunderstood and in need of an improvement - and grounded in an understanding of communication processes as controllable. Also, as I argue in the next, it implies a situation of 'pure culture'.

⁴² A recent example of this is the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 before and during which a massive branding campaign was undertaken. Later criticism claimed that this positive image sought to hide or distract attention from less encouraging stories of China, such as poor conditions for human rights and free speech.

This perception of the communicational inter-action as *conflictual* and purely *cultural* heavily influences the field of intercultural communication in tourism. This is illustrated by the book *Cross-cultural behaviour in Tourism* (Reisinger & Turner 2003). In the preface, the authors state how 'there is a widespread and urgent need to improve the ability of those working in the tourism industry to understand and appreciate cultural differences and to translate that understanding into effective communication and interaction, and appropriate management and marketing strategies. There is also a need to enhance the ability of students and academics to measure and analyse cultural differences in the tourism context using a scientific research approach' (Ibid.:XIII). The point is accentuated by the authors through a quote from Immanuel Wallerstein, stating that 'culture is about differences and cultural differences are obvious' (Wallerstein 1990, in Reisinger & Turner 2003:8). The authors explicitly establish cultural difference as the point of departure and as the challenge or problem to be addressed without further explanation or argumentation. It is *because* of this fact of difference, that knowledge, tools and ways to better deal with it must be developed and conveyed to managers, marketers, students and researchers.

The authors adapt a substantialist understanding of culture in which it is seen not only as the primary unit of analysis, and as something which should be taken into consideration in social interaction, but also perceived as something 'out there', something 'obviously' existing in the world (and in tourism) prior to its analysis. A way to deal with this fact is through 'a scientific research approach' in which the strong culturalisation of tourism and the tourism product stands heavily contrasted with the de-culturalisation and purification of research. With its apparent objective and value-free engagement research is positioned within a 'cultural free' realm from where cultural differences may be accessed and measured in an unbiased manner. As demonstrated by Haraway (1991), this sort of research makes use of the god-trick, dis-locating and dis-connecting itself by seeing everything from nowhere. Apart from demonstrating how scientific research tends to disconnect itself from its field of study in seeing everything *except science* as based in and upon culture, the above section also illustrates how intercultural communication in tourism is perceived and encompassed as a meeting between different cultures. Although some researchers, such as Smith et al. (1977), acknowledge uneven positions of power and difference in social or economic status as part of the interaction between 'hosts' and 'guests', it is culture and cultural differences which is identified and taken as a point of departure in the study of tourism communication – not social, political, economic or other differences.

De-culturalising inter-cultural communication

By highlighting this strong emphasis on cultural differences, I do not wish to dismiss their existence nor refuse their role or consequences in tourism (or in other places for that matter). Neither do I claim that cultural differences do not play an important role in tourism communication. Instead, I simply consider how and why such an important role was appointed to culture in tourism and tourism communication in the first place. To understand this, I suggest, the great importance given to culture must be seen as an effect rather than something given in the order of things (Law 2000). The most basic question to be asked and answered in relation to intercultural communication in tourism is not what can be done to manage or transcend cultural

differences, but rather how communication in tourism came to be about culture and differences and how cultural differences came to be so 'obviously' about differences?

The approach of this thesis dismisses essentialist categories and rejects the possibility of objectifying and studying these essences from a distance. In order to challenge cultural absolutes, determinism and essentialisation, the category of cultural differences is challenged as the starting point for our investigations. Instead of seeing cultural differences as the basis from which we should devise and shape our research questions and undertakings, the actor network approach encourages us to see it as an effect. This diverts the question from asking what cultural differences look like to how they came to be conceptualised as necessary for our understanding of many social processes, here within the tourism destination.

The aim is to describe how and through which complex modes of translation and ordering culture is produced, articulated and materialised as such an important part of understanding and managing tourism. Through a close description of what is pointed to as processes of 'intercultural communication' and how these are done through discursive and socio-material practices, culture emerges as a strategic tool in a larger and much more heterogeneous tourism construct. Similarly, studying processes of intercultural communication also reveal these as being far from just 'cultural', as other socio-material entities are connected to the communication network. Cultural communication takes place in and through places, by the use of technology, involving texts, policies and artefacts. It is never immersed in cultural ether and certainly not restricted or afforded purely by culture. As such, the communication of the destination becomes one which is socio-material, relational and continuous – and one that does not take culture as starting point but rather as a continuous and preliminary effect.

Positioning knowledge construction

In this chapter, I have addressed how various fields of study have influenced, supported and otherwise shaped the approach and knowledge of this thesis. Reversely, I also attempted to challenge and affect the fields by proposing a relational and socio-material approach to their objects of study, namely tourism, culture, identity and communication. As demonstrated, this present work on the destination construct is embedded and situated within a number of research fields which it critically draws upon. I argued how realities were identified, facts articulated and knowledges produced in and through these fields based on a number of assumptions. I demonstrated how these productions intermingled with my own investigation, production and articulation. Seeing the field of research and knowledge production within tourism as a network of connected and co-constitutive entities challenges the common conceptualisation of tourism research as divided into a business-oriented 'inside' and non-business 'outside' with different paradigms and conflicting goals. Instead the tourism research network is considered as highly heterogeneous and yet connected as a knowledge producing entity. In this *fractionally coherent entity*, differences were constantly ordered but also challenged using institutional, discursive and socio-material tools. It was concluded that since we must constantly deal in multiplicity and since 'the conditions of possibility do not necessarily come in large blocks' (Law 2000:18), knowledges, such as the knowledges produced in tourism research, are never homogeneous and

uncontested. They may still, however, be considered as connected parts in shaping the concepts, questions and terrain of tourism research.

In my critical reading of the field of cultural tourism research I addressed the underlying notions of culture showing how these are connected to essence and difference. I showed how this affected issues and understandings of culture in tourism, for instance by studying and identifying conflicts or clashes at the destination as cultural. Instead, I suggested seeing culture not as the start, but as the end of a chain of relations, not as a fix foundation but as an effect and an agent in tourism and in the destination construct. Moving on, I showed how identity is used as an important part of the branding of the destination. In destination branding research, core values of the place are aligned with place identity identified by tourists or other 'place consumers'. In my short review of this growing field of research, I pointed to the understanding of essence and control which grounds this understanding. It was argued that seeing identity and place as solid and detectable research objects and branding instruments neglected not only the heterogeneity of place. It also ignored the mechanisms of exclusion and power struggles underlying the possibility (or impossibility) of pointing to, authorizing and implementing certain core values and identities related to the place. As an alternative to the current branding undertakings in tourism research and industry, I proposed a approach tracing the socio-material orderings and workings from which core values, identity and personality as they are stabilised and materialised at the destination.

Finally, intercultural communication in tourism was addressed in order to once again demonstrate the way culture is encompassed as difference in this field - as well as in many other fields revolving around tourism. It was shown how the field combined a substantialisation of cultural and cultural difference as a self-contained entity with an objectifying god-trick from where research was able to analyse it in non-cultural and value-free terms.

The work of this thesis is inscribed into the fields of research introduced in the above. It is from these fields, from this hinterland, that the present thesis adopts some of its key notions and terminology (tourism, communication, culture, the tourist destination) and from those it seeks to relate, position and oppose itself. The results of this localised positioning are presented in the following chapters of analysis. These are seen as a knowledge producing network upon which I construct a new localised and embodied objectivity (Haraway 1991:188).

Chapter 5

'There is the difference'.

Difference and conflict at the destination



“There is the difference. I don’t know if you know. This is: if you are born in Zakopane [still] for two-three generations, you are not Górale. You are Zakopian [Zakopane dweller].”

This quote came from Barbara, a dynamic business woman in her late thirties during an interview. In our conversation we had otherwise been talking about her tourist agency and the company website. I had taken contact with Barbara because of the website of her travel agency, which at the time was available in more than 15 different languages⁴³. This website had meant, as another informant had earlier pointed out to me, that Barbara at the time of the interview almost entirely worked with foreign customers. This unusual international outreach for a small enterprise in Zakopane as well as the experience and visions of her and her business partner, an old school friend, was the subject of our conversation. I had been interested in hearing more about her undertakings, her experiences so far and her opinion on Zakopane as an increasingly international destination. However, when transcribing the interview, what I found - apart from material on the main subject of discussion, namely her views on local tourism development - was a number of statements about belonging to Zakopane and about being Górale. This was unexpected, not least because Barbara was not herself a Góralka⁴⁴, but had obtained her traditional Górale surname through marriage. It might wonder why Barbara chose to mention and highlight this ‘difference’ to me. Especially so since she, as a non-Górale, according to her own definition positions and reifies herself as one of those being different.

So why did Barbara tell me about this difference and why did she deemed this information important for me to know when I inquired into tourism development? On a broader note, how is this *difference-making* of relevance in relation to a description of the destination construct? This is what I will clarify in this next chapter. This first analytical chapter serves to contextualise the processes and practices of difference-making, which I argue contribute to the construction of the destination and which will be further investigated in the following chapters of analysis. Whether the destination is examined as a contested place (chapter 6) or is investigated through the following of an object (chapter 7), land and accommodation facilities and practices (chapter 8) or specific performances of Górale connected to tourism (chapter 9), patterns of present and absent, of sameness and difference, contribute to its ongoing construction. Therefore, I attempt in the following to display the appointment of differences as they are identified by destination actors and made manifest at the tourist destination, subsequently discussing how this may be analytically encompassed.

I will do so by initially addressing and discussing this notion of *difference* mentioned to me not only by Barbara but also by many other informants when talking about the destination and appointing its various actors: locals, tourists, objects, practices and discourses. Starting from a short account of how the notion of

⁴³ The site was translated into that many foreign languages through automatic computer translation, which also showed in the sometimes almost incomprehensible word constructions and sentences. On my last return to Zakopane, only three languages remained apart from Polish: English, German and Norwegian, the language and nationality of the tourist agency’s three biggest customer groups.

⁴⁴ The feminine declension of Górale

cultural conflict is commonly regarded in tourism research, I show how tourism actors point to and articulate differences as either grounded in an idea of *culture* or of *tourism agency*. Differences are situated between cultures, between local and outside types of behaviour, between the public and private sector and between disparate preservation and development strategies deployed in regards to tourism. I then introduce the relational and socio-material approach as an alternative to be applied in order to account for difference. Drawing upon field material, it is argued that seeing cultural conflicts as one effect (out of many) rather than the point of departure in the destination analysis provides new perspectives on grasping difference and its role in the destination network. To substantiate this, a number of practices and performances are displayed in which actors in the destination network articulate, point to and emphasise difference, but also ways in which the difference is enacted - and contested - through and within various practices, strategies, places and modes of ordering. As I show, this is done as actors connect the notion of difference to various ways of behaving and acting in regards to tourism: buying land, running a restaurant, wearing a costume, planning or managing tourism development.

Difference at work: constructing cultural conflict

Looking for and determining 'impacts' of tourism on culture and identity is not an easy task. This is especially so when these notions are not theoretically conceived as 'real' or objectively observable. However, what can easily be observed is that these notions are constantly ascribed with meaning and normative evaluations. Whether they are - or are perceived as - real or not, as constructed or simulacrum, they *matter* to (some) people (Moscardo & Pearce 1999). Through their 'mattering', differences contribute to shaping and constructing what we encompass as the social as they are established, defined and in other ways put to work and into effect. In the approach unfolded in the following chapters, differences as well as other features frequently involved in the representation, staging and construction of the destination such as identity and culture are not seen as essences or as stable and historically unchallenged 'artefacts'. On the other hand, it is not my aim to deconstruct these notions in the sense of disregarding the significance and very real consequences they have for people. A lack of coherence between a theoretical approach of constructivism and a 'practical essentialism' through which informants themselves address, perceive and give meaning to difference is addressed by analytically bridging the essence/construct dualism. Hereby I seek to avoid an analytical separation between what people say and do and how we, as researchers, explain and make sense of these statements. This is done by disregarding the question of what this difference consist of, whether in terms of culture or identity, instead focusing on the description of its workings and effects.

Instead of investigating what differences *are* and establishing an a priori meaning or essence to them, the objective is to investigate what appointed differences *do* and how these work as instruments of creating, transforming and communicating meaning and negotiating power and representations. As was also described in chapter 4, this changes the perception of culture to seeing it as a *strategic tool* for shaping and ordering the destination. This approach focuses on how differences are constituted through network building activities and how this ongoing constitution affects the destination network, its actors as well as the activities and actors that are Othered in this movement. In applying such an approach, new means are given so to

investigate and perceive difference as effects rather than a stable entity, as an actor rather than a stable building block in the tourist destination network. In the context of the destination, an interrogation of difference hence becomes important in the way it is seen to impact how the destination is ordered, enabled and communicated, in short how the destination is constructed. Maintaining the importance of the relational and symmetrical character of the destination network means that although notions such as identity, culture, heritage and authenticity, which will be addressed in this and the following chapters, might be fluid and intangible – a constantly redefined effect of, rather than a basis for human encounters with its material and social surroundings - they are constantly at work through changing relations and enactments of the destination.

This investigation in network relations establishes these notions as important because of their role and working in the construction of the network. Through their relation to the destination, these notions help create what *is* – or rather what *works*, although temporarily and inconsistently. Such a thing that is/works at the tourist destination - because it is pointed out, articulated, researched and taken into consideration as a mattering matter - is the *cultural conflict*, which represents a major and important field of study in tourism research. As argued in chapter 4, seeing the destination as a (at least potential) conflictual or problematic cultural meeting ground results from seeing cultures as grounded in difference. This idea of conflict at the destination is seen as one of the most problematic and infamous research topic within tourism, often described through and by the cultural divide between host and guest. Many tourism scholars have investigated tourism related conflicts, some in terms of miscommunication (Jaworski & Pritchard 2005), others as increased commodification (Cohen 2001, McLeod 2006), loss of meaning and authenticity (Smith (ed.) 1977, MacCannell 1992, Taylor 2001) or as negatively affecting national or local heritage (Hewison 1987). Research and empirical evidence from various tourism destinations show that the tourism development have resulted in what is often identified and explained as cultural clashes, misconceptions or conflicts (Smith 1977, Lew & Kennedy 2002). As argued in the previous chapter, the basis for the seeing the destination as a site of spatially demarcated conflict is a view of culture as difference.

A different, but somewhat complimentary understanding which supports the idea of the destination as a field for cultural conflict is the perception of it as being grounded in opposite strategies or ways of acting, in this case through divergent opposing tourism agencies and ways of doing tourism, for instant within tourism management and development at the destination. In this perspective, potential or actual conflicts on the destination are seen as founded not in cultural differences inherent to groups, but rather attributed to social behaviour and human action. As the former perspective, this one can also be retrieved in tourism research writings, in which tourism development projects are seen as creating conflicts between different groups investigated and presented as juxtaposed (de Kadt 1979). However, as opposed to the former understanding which was based on *structures of culture*, i.e. how one or several cultures could be seen as structuring or determining a destination, the strategy approach is based on *human or social action*. This understanding is retracted from the universalist idea of progress in which mankind is driven by dynamics of development and necessary change (Knudsen 1998). The destination is created, changing and developing according to

actions carried out by people or groups actively and reflexively deploying various – and possibly conflicting – strategies to their advantage. People promote, move and develop the destination based on their respective agendas.

The conceptualisation of conflict at the destination as either rooted in incommensurable cultural differences or in differing social strategies can be retrieved in the discourse of destinations actors and may be identified in the way differences at the destination are appointed by its actors. In the next, it is demonstrated how these discourses are used by destination actors themselves to conceive and explain difference (and potential or actual conflict) at the destination. This is succeeded by a discussion of the consequences in transferring this difference/conflict perspective onto a research agenda, suggesting how a relational approach transcends an understanding of difference as either rooted in cultural structures or human action – and as invariably resulting in conflict.

The business man and the village. Difference in culture

In tourism marketing, Zakopane and its surrounding area is portrayed as the ‘capital’ of the thriving culture of the Górale still preserving a distinct dialect and tradition. Also the stunning nature of the surrounding mountains is promoted along with skiing, hiking and other outdoor activities. As will also be shown in the following chapters, Górale and later external workers have been employed in the tourism industry providing accommodation, food and guiding services for visitors since the dawn of tourism in late 19th century and the later development of mass tourism during socialism. Mass tourism gives rise to reflections and discussions in different areas of local society regarding how local culture is and should be coping with foreign impact and influence⁴⁵. In the examples displayed below, *the business man* is discursively used by informants to demonstrate how difference and conflicts are based on an assumption of distinct and incompatible cultures. As a contrast, the idea of *the village* is used as a means to specify and accentuate a local distinction and uniqueness.

Many local inhabitants voice their concern of an increase in exogenous ‘business men’ in the local tourism industry, which has succeeded in remaining in the hands of locally owned and operated travel agencies, hotels, restaurants and ski lifts. This is retrieved with Jan K., an architect and well-known and fervent participant at different local cultural events, who says:

‘There’s a lot of foreign influence in the region [...]. I don’t mean the tourists – the tourists have always been here, they are a blessing for us in a way. What I mean is a growing group of businessmen, who buy land and build apartments to sell away to strangers. The prices of land and flats are so high here, that you can easily become rich by doing so. And they do it [...]. I say that it’s like selling our homeland piece by piece. It’s a tragedy, which puts all the most beautiful places at risk [...] It’s the Russians, the Italians, some people who deal with illegal business.

⁴⁵ Of course this idea of one homogenous, local culture is an ideal, since the place has been under cultural influence by Austro-Hungarian and Nazi occupants, socialist rule, not to mention tourism.

They don't do it because they like it here; they do it, because they know that the prices of land will grow fast. This is a threat.'

In his statement, the business man is presented as an exogenous, alien and unwanted element to the place, although not all foreign influence is condemned, since the business man is opposed to the tourist which 'in many ways is a blessing'. The clash is not identified between local and foreign, but rather between people with a genuine interest in the local and people chasing profit. In a similar way Jurek, a local mountain guide, also comments on the recent land purchases and how it is used to set up private pensions and hotels:

'Especially these last years, more people from the middle of Poland have come. They build pensions with good accommodation. Everything is for rent here. They come here 100% for business, to make money.'

Not only land ownership, but also the alien overtaking of local business, in this case restaurants, is seen as a treat. This is exemplified through Małgorzata, a restaurant owner, who like Jan K. engages as a proponent of local folk culture, as she complains over the business man and his threat to local culture:

'Our folklore is becoming more and more popular. And that's why a lot of people, that have no idea what real folklore is, try to make restaurants and pubs in this highlander style. And truly speaking, mostly they have nothing to do with this highlander style [...]. These business men who want to have their restaurants in the main street, in Krupówki Street. You see the waiters. They look ugly, because they don't know how to wear the dress. They have no idea how to wear it'.

As was also mentioned by other informants, business men are seen to inundate the most populated areas of the destination as a result of the increasing popularity and profitability. According to Małgorzata, their highly questionably 'folkloric' restaurants are staffed with an external labour force with no idea of how to wear the Górale costume which they are asked to wear. Referring to the use of the traditional female costume by non-local waitresses, Małgorzata notes:

'She will not wear *kierpce* [hard soled leather moccasins], she will have high heels. She will not iron the white traditional blouse; she will not use starch [...]. But this is the tradition: it must be white, must be beautiful and stiff. Also they are sewing the dresses from other materials and so on'.

In the quote, it is not the tourist who is set to represent a conflicting contrast to local culture, but rather the people in tourism development or services. In Małgorzata's eyes, they display a lack in knowledge and sensibility towards Górale culture and traditions. In the above quotes, business men along with non-local land buyers and staff that are identified as a threat to local culture. The tourists are perhaps surprisingly,

rather seen as a taken-for-granted premise or even perceived as a blessing. Considering the common dichotomy usually seeing the tourist as the opposition to local hosts, it is interestingly not foreign tourists, but rather Poles from large cities, who are identified as the main 'threat' and as the really different to Zakopane.

The figure of the business men, with his apparent hunt for profit and disregard of Górale tradition, is contrasted to another collective figure, namely that of *the village*. As a comment to my interrogations on the developmental potential of foreign tourism, a young industry worker told me with a grin upon his face:

'People from Zakopane are still laughing that it is not a city, it is the country still. So there's nothing here apart from mountains and in winter - also mountains'.

This was confirmed by many others, including the town mayor:

'Zakopane is in its nature a big village. We have over a thousand farmers here, people who have their fields, their farms. It's really like a big village.'

Jan K. also expresses a similar opinion:

'Zakopane itself was never a city – it was always a village and it still remains a village. We're right in the city centre. This house is one of the oldest ones around – built in 1897. We used to have cows and other animals here only a few years ago, when my father-in-law was still alive. We used to have a proper farm with fields, and we ran the farm in the Górale manner directly in the city centre. [...] Zakopane isn't a city in the minds of the people. Zakopane is something different.'

These statements highlight the culture of Zakopane as unique by connecting it to tradition, farming and folklore. From a perspective focusing on difference, they provide a contrast to the profit-oriented business men. By referring to its 'village nature' and hence implicitly also to its identity and people belonging to it, cultural differences as well as cultural conflicts are conceived and explained as structurally embedded. The village is not a specific type of person, but rather a communal and more generic term which identified and symbolised the antithesis of the business man.

The question of development. Difference in agency

This discursive contrasting the business man to the village, between people from elsewhere in Poland and the Zakopane 'villagers' is grounded in an idea of difference and potential conflict between cultures. A similar - or rather supplementary - discourse on difference and conflict working to contrast groups involved in tourism relates to *tourism agencies*. The discourses of development are grounded in the universalist idea that local culture must evolve from its present (low) stage to a future higher one, most often articulated as European or international. Like the idea of opposing and conflicting cultures of the business man and the

village in Zakopane, tourism is the focal point in a discussion of how and in what ways, using what strategies or technologies, it should be developed – or preserved. As will be shown, the discourses on development are explained by human or social action, in the way that individuals or various forms of organisations are identified or identify themselves as actively engaging in the active development of (or preservation against) tourism.

During an interview with Leszek, a young man working with advertisement sales for a new English town map, he addresses the question of tourism development by pointing to a difference between through an identification of his own strategies as opposed to his opponents, the local Górale business owners:

‘They must understand about advertisement. You know, mountains, beautiful views, it’s not enough. Because if they want to have more tourists, more hotels and restaurants, more money, they must have very good advertisement on their websites, you know what I mean? But you must understand the Górale people are particular, inaccessible. It was hard to convince them that opening up is necessary, especially here in Zakopane. Being open towards advertising, towards the Internet’.

In his remark, Leszek identifies the local tourism owners (which he identifies as Górale) as being unwilling to understand about the needed activities necessary to attract and develop tourism. In this approach to tourism, development is a positive, implicit and unquestioned fact. Krzysztof, a head of a public tourism development project in Zakopane also recognises the important role of the developer who must work to change outsiders perception of the town. In this quote Krzysztof hereby challenges the perception of the towns’ village status:

‘Zakopane is something like a European town, sometimes containing more things than in the most popular places in Europe. Tourists are thinking that Poland is villages, small villages, hardworking people like in Eastern Europe 20 years ago. It’s our job to change that’.

By emphasising Zakopane as similar rather than different from ‘a European town’ and as highly developed in terms of tourism offers, Krzysztof points to Zakopane as being on a compatible and comparable level with other places – it is not something different, but rather something *same*. Barbara, the tourism agency owner from the opening of this chapter, also challenges the village-status by comparing it to other international and European ski resorts:

‘Zakopane is a very good place for families and for beginners. There are not very many places in the world – I used to ski in really many places in Europe – where you have a city that is still a city. There are 30,000 people living here, so it is not a village like I don’t know Val d’Isère for example. A lovely place for skiing, but small. Only hotels, restaurants. I was there in May and everything was closed, nobody was there, only our group. The shop was open two hours per day. So you really felt like being at the end of the world. Here, there are so many people, the

theatre, maybe not for foreigners, but the cinemas and all these discos, bars, restaurants, etc. And everything is so close and you can stay vis-à-vis the slope and it's still a 20 minutes walk to the centre. Or you can stay in the centre and in ten minutes drive or take a bus or taxi to the slope.'

So to Barbara, Zakopane is a town, and quite a rare one on an international scale. In comparison to a renowned French resort which in her opinion is a lovely, but small village, Zakopane is presented as a real town. In the interview however, Barbara brings forward and expresses a perpetual need for development:

'I always think that we are four years behind Western Europe. And for the people who come from the Western Europe, it's so easy sometimes to find something that we do not have here.'

Not only must Zakopane develop in order to reach a higher Western European level according to Barbara. Also, they must make sure not to be overtaken by the neighbouring Slovaks, which on a ranking scale are just one step below Poland: 'We are some years behind Western Europe and they are a few years behind us'. Although the level of tourism development is still lower than the Polish, it may only be a matter of time, according to Barbara, before Poland and Zakopane are overtaken:

'They have so many attractions. [...] this is our main competition when I think about it. When people find out that they can get so much in Slovakia in a small region, they... maybe they...'

Barbara clearly shivers at the unspoken thought. In order to decrease the gap to Western Europe and to avoid a Slovakian overtake, proper measures are necessitated. This involves a new way of thinking in which 'nothing is impossible'. This mindset is contrasted to one, not identified as rooted in national differences, but rather between sectors, which is seen to affect the level of and possibilities for development:

'Now most of the people working in tourism know that there is nothing that is impossible. You very rarely say "No you can't do that". [...]. Unlike in the national park [Example of a group wanting to visit a cave outside of the season outside of opening hours. Impossible]. I think this is the kind of thinking. Especially because it is a public business. Private business is much better'.

Barbara opposes private and public tourism business, in which the former sees possibilities and the latter does not, resulting in very different sets of practices, for instance concerning tourism promotion:

'There is not much promotion for Zakopane. Have you seen some promotion at all? That's because they don't go for any exhibitions, any trade fairs, what ever. I think it is the government promotion office, which should go.'

As seen, Barbara allocates the lack in vision, commitment and marketing not to the Górale, as did Leszek, but in this case to the public sector. This sector is opposed to the private sector in which people according to Barbara have learnt never to say 'no' and that nothing is impossible.

As a contrast and protest to this development discourse, others point to the need for preservation and nature conservation at the tourist destination, as addressed by the mountain guide Jurek:

'The main idea is to save nature. We have to save nature; this is our treasure, the natural environment. A lot of people would like to develop cable cars but I think we should save nature. It's very easy to destroy nature, but it's difficult to recover. It's fragile'.

Jurek argues for this need of preservation by contrasting, as did Krzysztof and Barbara, Zakopane to other places. An example is the French Alps in which he has himself seen 'concrete buildings and a lot of ugly settlements'. Jurek states that 'tourism progressive' town council members should be careful in their eagerness to develop. Although he asserts the importance of preservation, it is still one which must be controlled and strategically implemented – unfortunately the responsible politicians are not always the most capable, since they are most commonly replaced with other tourism novices every four years at the local election:

'They [the elected politicians, ed.] haven't got an understanding of how to develop this branch of tourism. It is coincidences that are responsible sometimes. Too many beginners are responsible for tourism. They did a lot a few years ago. They, the council and the mayor, made a lot of stupid regulations against the tourists'.

During the interview, Jurek brings out examples of ways of developing and preserving nature and local culture, discursively establishing differences between places such as French ski resorts and Zakopane, between politicians and tourism professionals such as guides and between different understandings and undertakings towards tourism development and cultural or natural preservation. As seen, the differences in culture and agency are in some situations linked, as between the Górale not wishing to develop and the developing outsiders. It may also be drawn however along other lines, in which the wish or possibility of developing is identified as connected to public versus private agency or as part of stage of development (Poland vs. Slovakia, French resorts vs. Zakopane).

Challenging the difference. Cultural conflict as effect

What we have seen in the above are ways in which destination actors appoint differences between the identity and actions themselves and others. As argued, these are identified as rooted in cultural differences – the business man and the village - or explained as differences in agency or stages of development. Diverging agency or levels of development are identified as running along a number of divides such as the private/public, Górale/developers, Zakopane/French resorts and between ways of acting oriented towards

development, which was also opposed to preservation. In this next part of the chapter, a new way of describing difference is introduced, namely differences seen as an effect of *socio-material ordering*. In this present context of destination differences, the aim is not only to pinpoint to their existence but also, more importantly, to understand how these are created and upheld and what or whom their presence and working at the destination may serve, hereby also verging on a normative or political quest of *how else* (Mol 1999). Mol believes that ontology is not given in the order of things but rather is actively 'brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices' (Ibid.:6). This implies that if multiple realities can be enacted, some might be better than others in answering questions about what we *ought* to do. Not only is question of politics, but also one of ethics. As researchers we must ask ourselves what kind of social reality we want to help make more or less real, as according to Law & Urry (2004), 'since every time we make reality claims in social science we are helping to make some social reality or other more or less real' (Ibid.:396). Based on this agenda which seeks to combine a relational and socio-material analytical approach with a transparency which acknowledged an ethical stance or dimension to research, the concept of difference is not taken as the starting point of analyses, but rather to explore how these differences appear and endure. The point is that an understanding and explanation of conflict in terms of difference in culture or strategy may very easily, as has been illustrated in the above, result in a freezing of juxtapositions between individuals or groups already pointed out as incommensurable or imbalanced; as being conflictual. In this following, the aim is not to reject the fact that differences are connected to conflicts, but rather to provide a different and hopefully more fruitful analytical description of how these differences are created and appointed.

As mentioned in the above, the relational approach to difference is not an attempt to ignore or deny very real consequences or strong feelings connected to it, such as the notions of local or place identity, or negating its very real consequences in terms of cultural conflict. Rather, it is to open our eyes to other ways of grasping and understanding the social. In the above, it was shown how difference was often used by tourism actors as a way to address and frame positions and occurrences taking place at the destination. Conflicts were either explained as the workings of immanent cultural structures or understood as the result of directed, intentional human action and articulated as difference inherent to culture or opposing strategies. Such narratives could easily serve as proof of differences *existing* between hosts and guests, developers and preservationists, locals and outsiders. In order to avoid this substantialist position, we must, according to Munro (1997), not treat divisions as cultural artefacts: 'rather to co-opt an exclusive range of distinctions, as if these could be kept sure and inviolate as part of the researcher's toolkit, the interest is in finding better ways of tracing their general or specific circulation' (Ibid.:17). Instead, we may ask how processes of iteration make some differences present and other absent. Such an approach understands differences at the destination not as deeply rooted in or inherent to a static social or cultural 'core' or as a pervasive source of conflict. Rather difference is seen as a destination actor itself, one which enables and obstructs a range of ways of being at and doing the destination. The notion of difference is perceived as a result of various workings of the destination network and simultaneously as a structuring actor itself within the destination construct. The difference hence transforms from *being* a starting point for inevitable conflicts, to *working* as an ordering tool.

A relational and symmetrical focus on how differences are done at the destination rather than on existing differences help to transcend a binary opposition between locals and outsiders, host and guest, tradition and modernity, or conservation and development rooted in and explained through cultural structures or human action. Instead, it is proposed to view these conflicts and strategies as practices by showing how a variety of discourses, artefacts and practices are ordered and integrated within the heterogeneous destination network. Where the former approaches based their classifications and interpretations on inherent differences, a relational network approach sees them as an active part in a process of ordering these differences. Differences are no longer to be conceived of as an inherent foundation, but rather as an ongoing social-material production. From this perspective, not only the articulation and pointing out of things, people and performances are important but also tracing how they are assembled and ordered into a destination network. With this perspective cultural conflict takes on a whole new role as an agent and (contingent) effect rather than a causal root.

In this perspective, difference, as we shall see, is a productive network actor as well as a result of the network building activities taking place at the destination. Through its narration and enactment difference acts, as will be shown, to delimit and frame the destination, by including and excluding people, things, discourses and ways of being as either same or different. As such, difference is not only a root to conflict, but also a strategic device to order the destination and define its content in a highly flexible and negotiable way. For Barbara, although not being a native Góralka, this flexibility in terms of delimitations provides her with opportunities to use and even reshape the limits of the differences, which she initially spoke of and pointed to herself. This is seen in a quote in which she explains her use of the highlander folk costume:

'I sometimes put on the costumes, just for fun, when we have a group [...] And I think it is so good that you have three or four different costumes, because there are different fashions for the folk costumes as well. And then it's no problem, some for weddings, some for funerals or for important meetings. And you just put the folk costume on and then you know you are properly dressed'.

Although Barbara acknowledges, even passes on, the idea of there existing a cultural difference in Zakopane in between Górale and non-Górale residents, she is still able to make use of its effect, namely the distinction or demarcation between the local and the outside. She does so by integrating its marks, such as the costume, into her work with visiting groups of tourists, but also as part of important local celebrations such as funerals and weddings as well as for 'important meetings' for which the costume is judged the most appropriate attire. Hence, for Barbara, the possibility of pointing to differences becomes a *strategic tool*, by and through which she is able, as a tourist agent, to promote the destination as special and as a local inhabitant to connect herself to Zakopane. Hereby, the possibility of pointing to differences displayed itself as a flexible strategic instrument. Creating and reinforcing differences not only works to seclude and cut off, but also as a way to *include*. Hence, difference becomes not only a repressive but also an enabling and highly

productive instrument. As we shall see in the next, the notion of difference and the categories which are produced within it are also negotiable and pliable.

Zofia is a well-spoken and energetic woman employed in a leading position at the mayor's office. In the spring of 2007 where an interview had been arranged, Zofia was preparing to welcome the FIS committee visiting Zakopane to evaluate it as a possible candidate for the FIS Nordic World Championship 2013⁴⁶. Due to these circumstances, our first interview gave us little time to talk, for which she apologised. During our short half an hour interview on Zakopane's tourism strategy and future plans for developing major sport events, Zofia reflected on some of Zakopane's assets as a tourist destination making it so easy to promote:

'The people are very open. The hospitality is nice and people like it. But it's changing a little bit because people in Zakopane are now mixed so much.'

Zofia explains this mix, as she calls it, in this way:

'Zakopane is getting a lot of people from other cities and other countries that are living here because they decided to stay here. And just the mentality of people is totally... how to say in English? Only five percent are original Highlanders'.

Asking about this asserted low number of Górale inhabitants, Zofia replies, confirming her previous statement: 'Five percent only. I was born here and can trace my ancestors back to 1578, this is the tradition of my family'. Following this unexpected turn from tourism strategy in our interview, I encourage Zofia to elaborate on the subject of being a Góralka, to which she sighs:

'But my husband is from Warsaw! And my kids were born here. But are they Highlanders or not? Who is strong enough to say: "you are Highlander, you are not"? Everyone who is born in the mountains is a highlander, no? Of course there is no problem of who is highlander or who is not, but all the people who are coming here bring their habits. Just... we are changing. Because they like our habits, we like their habits. And like in these different families, a lot changes. I remember the life in my family, the family of my grandparents. And just in mine it is quite different, generally life is quite different.'

Similarly to the interview with Barbara, Zofia brings out the idea of Zakopane as a place of change caused by the increasing mix of people with different origins and habits. Unexpectedly, the conversation is turned into Zofia's own family, one which is both characterised with a long lineage of Górale, a non-Górale husband and children with a contested or at least unclear identity and extraction. My questions and the interview guide which I had brought with me to the interview with Zofia had centred on tourism strategy and development.

⁴⁶ The candidacy was later that year given to the Italian resort of Val Di Fiemme

And yet in spite of this, I once anew found myself equipped with a transcript on identity, belonging, culture and difference! In the present interview morsel, Zofia talks of the changes in the local ways of life, habits and in mentality which she explains through a massive outside migration reducing the indigenous highlanders to a mere five percent of the population. While regretting the changes caused by this 'mix', she also negotiates definitions of belonging by rhetorically asking who is 'strong enough' to decide such things.

It is clear that Zofia considers herself as strong enough to answer (and decide?) who is highlander or not. To her, the answer is quite simple and straightforward: people born in the mountains are highlanders. By drawing this birth line, Zofia manages to include her own children as highlanders, a definition which does not concur with the traditional determination in which only people with long-established and traceable roots (usually three-four generations as stated by Barbara in the above) are perceived as real Górale. Yet by differentiating between people born in the mountains and people coming to the mountains as well as shifting between how things used to be and how it is today, Zofia still succeeds in blurring the boundaries between those belonging *here* and *today*, such as her and her family, to others, from either the past or elsewhere. Barbara and Zofia exemplify ways in which the difference and the boundaries between insiders and outsiders are flexible, negotiable and to be transgressed. However, the flexibility and negotiations also have their limits. As will be shown in the next interview abstract, the construction and narration of difference is contains boundaries and restrictions which are constantly defined, interpreted, challenged and reified in an ongoing movement. To show this a third informant is brought onto the stage.

Kasia is a young girl studying at university in Cracow. During the summer she works in Zakopane at the reception in one of the town's newly established hostels where I first meet her. We arrange to talk over a cup of coffee in a coffee shop. I ask her to tell about her experience working in a hostel, in which the predominant part of the guests consists of foreigners. We also talk of Zakopane as a touristy town and during the interview Kasia shares some of her feelings and opinions of living in a busy tourist destination. Kasia tells me of being born and raised in Zakopane and of her Górale father, which leads me to ask if she considers herself a Góralka. To this Kasia answers:

'I am half-Góralka. I am always joking that I am half-Góralka, because my father was Górale. I am joking of the half. Because if I told you that I am a Góralka, it would be offensive for the people from here, from Zakopane, for typical Górale. Because here, being Górale is something better than normal people. Something like a little bit different. It's like a folk culture and something like that. Usually they are saying that you have Górale and Cepr. Cepr are people who are not born here and who are not Górale. So I am also a Ceper'.

I am interested to hear how this status as half manifests itself in the practices of daily life. Does this mean that Kasia does not speak the dialect? And how about the costumes, does she wear that or not? Kasia answers:

'I speak dialect, but not very often. I was in a choir for about ten years, a typical choir for this place. So I have got the traditional costume. I can dance and sing 'po góralsku' (Górale style). But a very nice thing is that I have got some typical Górale friends. It's strange. For example when they talk to me they talk in Polish, typical Polish, and when they talk to each other, they use the Górale dialect. It's so different'.

I ask Kasia if she feels that they make a distinction between them and her. She says:

'Not a distinction, but they are just, they were making ... they just change their way of speaking. It's really nice because it's different'.

Continuing her attempts to describe this relation, which I clearly have difficulties understanding, she proceeds to elaborate on the connection to her Górale friends:

'It may affect, but very slightly. It's very small, you cannot distinguish it. In fact it's not like discrimination. It's just around, people who live here, they know [of] these typical families. They go to church with the special costumes. They celebrate some Catholic and some national celebrations in the costumes and everything like that. So you can see them easily everywhere in fact. Of course for example me, I've got the suit but I use it only sometimes when I've got some concerts or when I go to a wedding, because I need it. But else? Probably not. But it's nice. When you go to the Krupówki Street, there is always... Because the church, one of the churches, is at the bottom of Krupówki Street and I have to come all through this street to get there and it's really like: look at this skirt and these shoes. Oh my God!'

How to excavate and encompass the multiple and complex layers of this conversation? Or analytically speaking, what differences are appointed, negotiated or reinforced in this a narrative? At first, and from a personal point of view, I was slightly taken aback by this conversation. I was both surprised and shocked by the divisions, distinctions and exclusions which seemed to tower above and structure the life of this young Zakopane girl. Another thing about the interview which amazed me was how Kasia herself apparently without problems accepted not only a distinction between the categories of Cypre/Zakopian and Górale, but also an implied superiority embedded in the Górale identity and culture. Although the Górale narratives and representations were strong, I had not until then realised its massive impact on the lives of people in a town, where only 5 to 15 percent of the population were perceived as Górale⁴⁷. However, at least in Kasia's case, pointing to 'the difference' worked in terms of both limiting and structuring ways of identifying, defining and enacting oneself, both rendering some identities and ways of acting impossible, but also enabling others.

⁴⁷ As the question of Górale identity and ethnicity is partly self-ascribed, part ascribed by others by shifting or unclear criteria, the number of Górale in Zakopane is hard to quantify. The numbers I was given by various informants ranged between '5.000 people' (approx 16%) and '5%' (1500 people).

Allegories of difference

An interpretation, a way of ordering this complex reinforcement and recognition of difference lies perhaps in seeing it not only as repressive but also as productive. This perspective, inspired by Foucault's work on the governance of things and subjects in different time-spaces (Foucault 1980, 1999), reveals power not just as repressive, but also as highly productive. In an actor network approach this is further developed by Latour (1986): 'If the notion of "power" may be used as a convenient way to *summarise* the consequence of a collective action, it cannot also *explain* what holds the collective action in place. It may be used as an effect, but never as a cause' (Ibid.:265). Applying a relational approach to Kasia's use and enactment of difference demonstrates this productive yet powerful process through which difference is constructed, articulated and put to work as a potent actor naming and ordering the insiders and outsiders of the place. Through this dynamic process, difference appeared not as a homogeneous (or binary) entity, but rather as one which is constantly denominated and negotiated, a process continuously altering its shape and boundaries. By recognising and supporting difference, Kasia is not only produced as 'different' in repressive terms and not only enacts difference negatively⁴⁸. Kasia is also able to benefit from the productive side of this difference. She herself mentions some of the benefits of this difference, when she wears her costume or when she told her co-students down in Cracow where she studies of her provenance:

'When I told in Cracow two years ago that I am from Zakopane they said "Oh my God, really, perfect, it is such a great place"'.

Also, Kasia feels pride when people from abroad recognise and come to visit Zakopane:

'There are still more people here; and there are new people [...] And of course it is a compliment to us that people are coming from abroad, coming here and know about Zakopane. Because usually when you ask somebody from abroad about some cities they will say maybe Cracow and Warsaw. But now some people even say that they know Zakopane. So it's really nice for us'.

To Kasia, Zakopane is special because it is *different* and so does she become special herself. However, she also recognises herself as different (or half-different) to the Górale, which she initially appoints and narrates as the creators and 'enactors' of the same, from which the difference may be defined.

Ordering difference. Beyond hosts and guests

So why did Barbara mention the difference during our interview? Why was it important to bring up 'the difference', even when she was one of those being different according to her own utterance? And lastly, what did it have to do with the destination? In order to answer these questions, a material and relational analytical perspective was introduced as an attempt to transcend a dichotomised field and stare on

⁴⁸ Although she did mention excluding material effects of this difference, such as not having access to land or owning a house (see chapter 8).

difference seeking for proofs and reasons for immanent properties or inherent mismatches between cultures and agencies. The approach pointed to difference as an allegory of power and productivity. The difference did not represent itself as a stable binary opposition or as a 'classic' division between hosts and guests. Nor were it always and only a basis for conflict. Rather, the difference proved to be fluid, negotiable and dynamic as well as productive. The processes of ordering difference - and ordering *through* difference – also revealed itself as being closely connected to power which in a relational perspective is not to be seen as a resource to be possessed or exerted, but rather as a relational capacity.

By maintaining and enacting difference, Barbara and Kasia both remained in their role as outsiders, as 'different' to 'real Górale' while at the same time being able to wear the costume and profit from it; in Barbara's case by impressing clients and be well-dressed at formal meetings and for Kasia enjoying the admiration on Krupówki Street. Hence, the two were able to simultaneously confirm, challenge and enact the relation between the same and the difference, between the outside and inside. Also Zofia reaffirmed and enacted the difference while simultaneously defying it, hereby revealing the fluidity and negotiability of the boundaries between outsiders and insiders. In all three cases, the women simultaneously reinforced and took on the difference, creating a narrative interference between different modes of ordering. This worked as a necessary and strategic grip in order to avoid Othering and becoming absent. Had they not pointed to the difference, no distinction could have been drawn from it. Any advantage of drawing on Górale representations through the costume, the last name and the dialect and to relate to Zakopane as a birthplace, a home town, a special place or a tourist destination would have been lost. Had they contested Górale and all of its allegories of difference, its productive and performative powers would have become unavailable or inaccessible to them. Yet by allegorically balancing on the blurred boarder of difference and sameness, for instance by accentuating a Górale last name, a lineage or specific Górale practices and origins, Barbara, Kasia and Zofia were able to benefit from and challenge the difference while at the same time reinforcing it.

This chapter revolved around the concept of difference and how narratives on difference contributed to shaping and ordering the destination. The undertaking took it's begin in a quote from Barbara in which she pointed to the difference and drew a line between people which belonged to Zakopane as Górale and others which did not. And there is, true enough, 'the difference', as Barbara told me that day in the quote opening this chapter. But as seen it is far from a stable difference. Perhaps it is not even a matter of one difference, of one division between us and them, between that which is present and that which is absent. Rather, difference(s) may be negotiated, strategically deployed and constantly reshaped in a multiplicity of variations in which the different and the well-know is constantly shaped and redefined. This will be further unfolded and discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 6

Janosik is the best YO. Place and contestation



“They have stolen the land of our fathers! When I was young I used to walk a lot in the mountains, I know how it is suppose to look. Look how it has become now when we are no longer allowed to let our sheep graze there any longer: bushy, shrubby, ugly! The wood grows poorly. No, the park was a great misfortune to strike us!

In Ekströmer (1991:80, my translation)

The ‘land of our fathers’ claimed stolen in the above quote was the mountain land outside of Zakopane which in 1954 was nationalised and turned into the Tatra national park. What is described in this quote is not only how productive land was turned into recreational land through legislation, but also how the landscape in the eyes of the local beholder gradually lost its beauty as a consequence of its altered use and subsequent changing vegetation. At the time of interview, more than 30 years after the land conversion, the informant still remembers how the land used to look and how it ought to look. As pastures are replaced by dense vegetation and increasing forestation, the mountain and the land has lost its beauty, a beauty which is clearly linked to and upheld by its use, namely shepherding. Not only was the land taken, but so was its beauty.

Today, the nationalised mountain pastures and ridges of the Tatras serve a new purpose, that of attracting and receiving tourists. The Tatra national park protects a large part of the Polish side of the smallest Alpine region in the world consisting only of 24 mountain tops higher than 2500 meters. Each year the national park is visited by more than three million visitors, making it the most visited national park in Poland. Visitors can hike the lower forest paths and higher up the bare trails of the rocky High Tatras. By the giant cross on the top of Mount Giewont, the end goal of a popular hiking route, they may gaze into the distance or down onto the creeks, lower forests and distant valleys. The views are admired and often photographed and kept, or even, as done by Agnieszka, uploaded on the internet in order to share with friends. On Facebook, a social networking website, Agnieszka posted 28 pictures of deserted mountain views (in itself an accomplishment in this crowded park) with descriptions of where they were taken. She comments on her pictures writing: ‘Looking at them I want to go back:)))’. Agnieszka is Polish, but lives in London as an artist and teacher. In her summer vacations and if she can afford it, Agnieszka often goes to Zakopane for a week or more as part of her summer visit to her hometown of Katowice located just a few hours drive from Zakopane. She does so to hike and to enjoy the nature and beautiful scenery. In a later email to me, Agnieszka writes about her hikes into the mountains: ‘I seek secluded places, often start hiking very early or go on long and difficult hikes to reach the silence and seclusion. Trying to imagine, maybe, how it used to be, without thousands of tourist (not always prepared for the demanding nature of such hikes)’. To Agnieszka, and many others, the park is a place to be taken into use as a place to hike, a landscape of effort and strain, but also a landscape of silence, calm and relaxation - a landscape of beauty, which she seeks to return to as often as possible.



One of Agnieszka's pictures and its comment on Facebook: 'The trail: Kasprowy Wierch, Liliowe, Swinica, Zawrat, Kozi Wierch, Zleb Kulczynskiego, Czarny Staw, Murowaniec.'

In his late 1980s study on the mountain village of Ciche situated outside of Zakopane, Melcher Ekströmer (1991) notes as he was constantly asked about his doings around town:

'Being on a promenade (*na spacer*) represents something very exclusive for the village dwellers, something only outsiders carry about. For themselves they are always going somewhere: to the cows, to the shop, to town, maybe home, but never out and about just for "the pleasure of it". We assert [to a passing villager] that we have a purpose with our walking about, he knows that I am "writing a book" on Ciche and accepts – though with a certain mistrust – our assurance that we are not "on a promenade"' (Ibid.:22, my translation).

The connection between production, such as shepherding, and place as connected to and based on such productive activities, is sharply contrasted to that of the tourists, such as Agnieszka, now entering and appropriating the place for the sake of the 'promenade'. The contested character of places and landscapes in these examples show how perceptions of how to use and view the landscape are highly ideological and normative and also display the conflicting perspectives on nature: that of utility and that of the romantic gaze (Jones & Haugstad 1997). It shows how for some people, the place is – or should be – a place of production; a land to be cultivated and harvested, a land to work on and live off. For others, such as Agnieszka, this

same place is one to enjoy, one in which to recreate and to relax. The views on landscape, however, are far from fix and unchanging. Even less are they uncontested as seen in the next:

'Conservationists are alarmed by the number of tourists visiting the Tatra National Park, especially its centre, Zakopane. They advise to introduce temporary bans on tourist traffic on some routes in the park, arguing that the nature needs a break every now and then. Their primary concerns are the most popular routes: Morskie Oko, Koscieliska Valley and Giewont summit. Paweł Skawinski, head of the Tatra National Park, supports the idea. However, he claims that the park authorities have no intention of blocking tourist access to the Tatra Mountains. The project is heavily disapproved by the local Highlanders, who make a living from the tourist industry in the region⁴⁹.

This example displays the inherent dilemma of nature parks between protecting nature and providing for leisure, but also shows how some 50 years after its creation, the national park has (again) been turned into a means of income for the Górale as a productive and profitable landscape of recreation, which in their eyes cannot be allowed to be closed down for the purpose of conservation.

The incongruence concerning access and use of the land along with questions of how – and by whom – the destination should be represented and constructed raises a number of interesting questions about the concept of place and also, as was initially touched upon in the section on place branding in chapter 4, how the physical and discursive constructions and representation of places relate to tourism⁵⁰. The tourist destination, being a place of both work and leisure, of locals and tourists and a place of intense representation, may be seen as an epitome of contested place as exemplified in the above. Through the blurred and malleable borders between work and leisure, production and consumption, doing and seeing, the material and the ephemeral, the destination as place is constantly constructed, ordered and, as we shall see, challenged. In the following, I will discuss the concepts of space and place and briefly sketch out the development of what has been termed the spatial turn in the human and social sciences. The advantages of incorporating spatiality as an analytical category in tourism studies are demonstrated, introducing space and place as useful analytical tools. Next, a relational understanding of place is presented as a way to add a spatio-material element to place. This prevents seeing it as a neutral stage on which the social is performed and created. Instead, it is shown how place is as an actor as well as an effect of the social. By focusing on how Zakopane is ordered and communicated spatially, the prevailing discourses of place and place identity shows the destination as holding a paradigmatic as well as contradictory position as a place of *sameness* and of *change*.

⁴⁹ www.zakopane-online.com, accessed 06/10-08

⁵⁰ As presented in chapter 2, the allegory has been discussed as a replacement for representation as 'a method for non-coherent representation' (Law 2004:14) in our descriptions. In this chapter, 'representation' is addressed from the opposite side, as part of a strategy applied by destination actors in which a direct connection between reality and its representation is asserted.

As an icon to many Poles, Zakopane contains and represents a dramatic, intriguing and for some, proud part of Polish national history. At the same time, its branding and promotion by a constantly increasing number of both national and international travel agencies and tour operators challenges and transforms many historically rooted representations of the town hereby changing the use, accessibility and appearance of the town and its surroundings. The (seeming) permanence of the place is challenged when new actors are engaged in its definition. From this perspective, what the concrete place is or isn't, should or shouldn't be, what belongs in it or not, is not seen as objectively and spatially defined, but rather as a product of constant and relational cultural and material, political as well as ideological negotiations and constructs. This is shown through the example of 'Janosik' illustrating how different place identities, discourses, representations and materialities struggle on place and over place as part of the spatial ordering of the destination.

Spatiality and the spatial turn

'Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic.

If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be "purely" formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies'

Lefebvre 1977:341, in Ek 2006:55

The reflections on space and place which grounds this chapter were born out of the difficulty of maintaining the grip on Zakopane as the empirical and analytical field of study⁵¹. This gradually helped further the realisation of the paradoxical status of the destination as a both very limited and set representation and as a place packed with strategies, practices, discourses and politics, inclusion and exclusion by and through a multiplicity of destination actors. Furthermore, a relational approach challenged the idea of a field as fixed, but rather in a constant state of ordered, negotiated and socio-material construction. A special interest for the spatially bounded object of study permeates tourism studies, in which places such as resorts, cities, regions and countries are accorded a privileged position as point of departure or frame in many research studies (see Cronin & O'Connor (2003) for the example of Ireland). At the same time however, studies of tourism and travel often reveal exactly how transgressing, interconnected, or multisided - how both imagined and

⁵¹ Much scholarly work has been dedicated to defining and establishing distinctions between the notions of space and place. In some of this work however, they are used synonymously, in reverse or at random. In the present context and in accordance with the work of Michel de Certeau (1984), space is understood as physical space (espace), whereas place is seen as contextual and relational (lieu). This does not mean however that the physical and 'quantitative' features of space are excluded from the realm of place. Rather, its properties are seen as part of the continuous creation of place. This understanding is close to Henri Lefebvres (1991) definition of social space – although he uses the term space as I do. According to Lefebvre, an intellectual divide exist between a mental, philosophical space and physical embedded 'everyday' space. To overcome this dualism Lefebvre introduces a third so-called *social space*. This social space consists of three spatial elements in the production of space: *conceived* (representation of space), *perceived* (space of representation) and *lived* (spatial practice) (p. 42). Through these three dimensions of social space Lefebvre wishes to seize the place in how it is materially constructed, appropriated and given a (inter-)subjective meaning. Lefebvre's social space is connected and inseparable from the social relations and actions of which it is both an *outcome* and a *medium*.

physical - tourism destinations really are. This poses a relevant, but difficult question of where to empirically and analytically set the boundaries or where to 'draw the line' of the investigated place. Although my analysis is focused around a concrete locality, that of Zakopane, my intention is not to use spatial categories to pin down or demarcate the destination as a fixed and stable entity. Instead, it is my wish to challenge the idea or image mitigated in tourism marketing of a destination as a represented image (Morgan & Pritchard 1998) or as a set, packaged and sellable product (McLeod 2006). As an alternative to the perceptions of the destination as physical location or commodified tourism product, I wish to consider the category of place as an analytical tool to study how the destination is ordered as it is loaded with or linked to a number of discourses, properties, and materialities. In order to do so, a highlighting of the spatial aspects of the discourse, materiality, practices and strategies to be found at the destination is needed. In the following, I argue that tracing connections and relations rather than drawing boundaries provides a better understanding of the place as I propose to incorporate the concept of relational place as a grip to describing the destination.

Many authors have contributed and commented on the so-called spatial turn within the humanities and social sciences (see Soja 1999, Gieryn 2000, Kayser Nielsen 2005, Ek 2006). According to Olwig (2006:173), the notion of place is to be seen as an 'antithesis of location in space', as a critique of functionalistic spatial planning and quantitative locational analysis, which some have accused of creating 'placelessness' (Relph 1976) through their quantitative and mathematical advance. The aim of this new spatiality of human life (Soja 1999:261) was to complement the understanding of a historical and social dimension to our lives with a spatial one (Borch 2002). The spatial turn breaks with the common understanding in classic social theory, where space is being understood through distinguishable and demarcated spatial entities, such as territories, states or regions, spatially 'influencing' each other by their interaction⁵². Instead, a new human geography strives to trace connections and relational transformations between form, use, and meaning of place(s) (Soja 1996).

The spatial turn raises questions on how the concepts of space and place affect, penetrate and shape human life and conditions. It also focuses on how the spatial relationship between the 'real' and the imagined work as a dynamic and active parts in the construction of places. These include places such as Europe (McNeill 2004, Johler 2002), the city (Olwig 2006), the landscape (Löfgren 1992) and the boarder (Kayser Nielsen 2005), the community (Modan 2006), the trail (Ren 2006), the rural (Ching & Creed (eds.) 1997), the field (Coleman & Collins (eds.) 2006) and finally the tourist destination (Edensor 2001). Different approaches have been carried out in order to investigate specific strategies or practices of fixation, that is how mobile subjects become fixed in prescribed, 'sticky' places at specific times (Adey 2006, Ek 2007 & Hultman 2007). Others have explored conflicting discourses on place (Modan 2006), the possibilities of spatial counter-strategies and resistance (Pile & Keith 1997), improvisation (Edensor 2001) and contestation (Ren 2007). Exploring spatial construction, discourses and practices is not a question of deciding whether places of tourism (and/or other) are *either* regulated and directed *or* choreographed *or* spontaneous *or*... Rather it is a

⁵² c.f. Agnew & Corbridge (1995). See also Emirbayer (1997) for a more general critique of the notion of interaction

way to display the multiple ways the human condition lives, thinks, acts, struggles, and dreams, embedded in space, living on place.

The focus on spatiality within the social and human sciences has diverted attention to the fact that space is not an innocent or neutral category of observation as suggested by the opening quote of this section. This can partly be explained by the fact that a very clear and close connection exist between the study of place and its subsequent planning and management (Liburd 2006). In a tourism context, spatial planning and managing is concentrated and amplified at and through the destination, this epicentre of the longing for and staging of the tourism experience. Using the term of longing as a way to frame our understanding of what the destination is, already stresses its immaterial aspects: the ideas, dreams and fantasies connected to an imagined, discursively constructed and non-situated location. At the same time, the term of staging emphasises the constructiveness and amenability of the destination, but also the commodified character of it as a commercial product. These simultaneous destination attributes stresses the fact that although investigating representations of places are an important contribution to understanding how places are mentally and physically constructed and visualized (Urry 2002), they cannot stand alone.

Relational place and the destination

'Space is not, contrary to what others may say, a reflection of society but one of society's fundamental material dimensions and to consider it independently from social relationships, even with intention of studying their interaction, is to separate nature from culture, and thus to destroy the first principle of any social science: that matter and consciousness are interrelated...'

Castells 1983:311

One of the important generators in the spatial turn is what may be termed - on a much generalized note - *relational geography*. Relational geography is a string within geography in which space and place are seen not as stable entities, but rather as open and dynamic relational processes of becoming related to cultural and social practices (Murdoch 2006). In this perspective, place formations are not made up by structures, but by processes 'carving out "permanences" from the flow of processes creating spaces. But the "permanences" – no matter how solid they may seem – are not eternal: they are always subject to time as "perpetual perishing". They are contingent on the processes they create, sustain and dissolve them' (Harvey 1996: 261). These constantly changing places - or perhaps rather contingently and materialised spatial processes - are worked out through social action in ways that ceaselessly change over time (Ek 2006). In this socio-spatial dialectic situation (Soja 1980), the production of space is both the medium and the outcome of social action and social relationships. Through this relational approach, the Euclidean notion of space as fixed and absolute is overthrown. Similarly the Kantian conception of space as a 'container' for human activities (Murdoch 1998:358) into which random people, practices and objects may have been placed or thrown in is rejected. Places *are* not, but rather continuously *become* 'about relationships, about the placing of peoples, materials, images and the systems of difference and similarity that they perform' (Haldrup &

Larsen, 2006:282). Also, places are negotiated and contested *turfs* (Modan 2007), where struggles unfold over access to space and over the power to define what kind of place a given space is or should be.

In the relational ordering of place, the creation of place is seen as an effect of a number of discourses, practices and artefacts tying together and relating the city, its local inhabitants, the tourism planners and staff, the tourists and the physical environment and material culture to other entities perhaps considered as distant or irrelevant to understand and market Zakopane as a tourism destination. In short, the process of place creation involves a constant ordering of words, things, practice and performances. This becomes apparent in the next quote, in which an informant replies to a question on whether he has noticed a recent increase in foreign tourism in:

'They all think that since we've joined the EU we got flooded with foreign tourists. There were always many foreign tourists here, always, and we've always had good contacts with foreign countries. There are many Górale abroad – in the USA, in Austria and many other countries. There were always many foreign tourists here during the communist times. All these people in Denmark, they think that it's been like in China here, like a closed area. It's so untrue! We've had many foreigners and we could go abroad, back in the 60s, 70s, 80s. The first Górale band played in the USA in 1966!'

In the quote taken from an interview conducted by one of my Polish research assistants during my fieldwork in Zakopane, the well-known musician and architect Jan K. provides us with his view on Zakopane. He explains how the perception and understanding of the town by others [very clearly also including me in this category] is misunderstood according to him. In his argumentation, Jan K. introduces and actively connects artefacts, places, periods of time and different people and their acts to help describe, what the place *was*, *is* and what it *contains* - today and in past times. In this line of arguments Jan K. respectively contrasts and affiliated Zakopane with other places, such as China, USA, Austria, Denmark or just plain 'foreign countries' or 'abroad'. He also mentions the EU, tourists, communist times, travelling Górale and Górale music. Phenomena and actions such as mobility, isolation, flooding, contact, thinking, travelling and playing music all contribute in his discursive and socio-material ordering and construction of the place, hence highlighting concrete situations and possibilities, ways of doing and acting as well as imaginings and representations of the place. Jan K. relates his definition of Zakopane to the playing of music, travelling abroad, or 'having good contact with foreign countries'. This statement shows how 'the individual "reading" of surroundings is not inert, but active, dynamic, at work. Practice is, then, expressive, engaging or avoiding, making affect on what is done; and on the objects, including space, through which it is done' (Crouch 2006:25). In this sense, Jan K.'s relationship to Zakopane is performative. Bærenholdt et al. (2004) describe performativity as an alternative to a former emphasis of the visual consumption of place exemplified in tourism studies in the works of MacCannel (1976) and Urry (2002). Instead, the 'performance turn' seeks to displace 'studies of symbolic meanings and discourses with embodied, collaborative and technologised *doings* and *enactments*' (Bærenholdt et al. 2004:3).

Reusing a quote by Jan K. from the previous chapter, where it was used to illustrate how the town was framed as a village, it is not applied to show how material objects are brought into describing and enacting the place:

'We're right in the city centre – the Krupówki Street. This house is one of the oldest ones around – built in 1897. We used to have cows and other animals here only a few years ago, when my father-in-law was still alive. We used to have a proper farm with fields, and we ran the farm in a Górale style directly in the city centre.'

This is also shown in his critique of the attempts by others to spatially manipulate the destination in what is believed to be defective ways:

'[The town] has been growing ever since the 1920's, 1930's. There have been some attempts made to make it look like a regular city - take a look at Krupówki Street. It was a very bad idea; you can still see its echo here and there. It would have been better to turn it into a garden-city, like Witkiewicz [famous architect known for inventing the Zakopane building style] planned, with all the villas, houses and pensions standing in gardens, parks, in the green, right? The communists came up with an idea of turning Zakopane into a Communistic city, as they thought that it was a symbol of the pre-war Poland. They built blocks. They brought in people to work. They turned it into something very weird, we won't live till the day when it's all repaired.'

In these descriptions of the city, town planning ideologies and practices from different historical periods are challenged. Barns, hotels, streets, gardens, blocks are introduced, evaluated, integrated into the spatial network or rejected, Othered, as things – or people - not belonging. In this process of network purification, artefacts, people and practices are either connected to or disconnected from the network, discursively, socially, materially and in practice. Defining and performing the place becomes an ongoing struggle and process of contestation.

As seen, a spatial relational approach to the destination pushes the boundaries of tourism spaces as demarcated recreational areas and as territorially bounded places (Jóhannesson 2005). Integrating a spatial aspect to a destination analysis challenges how we conceive of and study the spaces and places of tourism. The destination emerges as a multiplicity of ordered and hierarchical socio-material relations mediating between the synchronic locality and globality of tourism and emphasizing its embeddedness in both. Concepts such as *local* and *global* as well as the boundaries set between them are seen as effects of the network, rather than preconceived social or geographic categories. The closely related and the remote is constructed and defined by the (dis/)connectivity of its entities as holiday offers pop up on the computer screen, as planes land, as receptionists greet, as keys open and lock hotel doors and as views and places are consumed and digested along with experiences and impressions – in short as spatial (and many other)

entities become engaged in a tourism network. Distance becomes something to be evaluated through its network relatedness and connectivity, not only something measured in absolute units. In a relational and socio-material approach, the tourism space is created and acted upon by a broad range of actors. Tracing the heterogeneous network of the destination displays and emphasises the various ways in which people and materiality connect to tourism practices and performances.

This heterogeneity does not mean however that the creation of places is arbitrary - only that it is not stable or deterministic. Places do hold some - or even quite a lot of - consistency, for example through the representations or imaginations of place. Hence, the destination is constructed, thought of, dreamt of and acted at and upon in relatively recurrent and recognisable ways. These spatial performances, imaginations or abstractions are based on available but subjectively chosen knowledge, normative ideas and ideological convictions expressed in and canalized through discourses (Sparke 2000:7). In that way, 'each social formation or "society" constructs conceptions and notions of space (and time) adjusted to its own needs and purposes of material and social reproduction' (Ek 2006:46). Again issues of power and the duality of spatial relations as both constraint and facilitation appear, asking how exactly inclusion and exclusion are delegated in relational space. The synchronic process of recurrence and possibility (structure and agency) will be exemplified in the case of the destination through the use of the concept of place identity presented below. It is argued that the construction of place in Zakopane is very much connected to a Górale place identity, but that new ways to see and talk about the destination also exist and challenge the place and its identities.

Destination place identities. Continuity and change

According to Massey (1998) 'identities/entities, the relations "between" them, and the spatiality which is part of them are all co-constitutive' (Ibid.:29). Based on this realisation, the collection of fieldwork material and the later analysis must look for how the engagement of various actors, continuously contributing to the construction of Zakopane, affect both the (seeming) permanence and ongoing transformation of the place along with the shifting identities connected it to. In her book *Turf wars. Discourse, diversity, and the politics of place* (2007) on the effect of a gentrification project in a Washington DC neighbourhood, Gabriela Gahlia Modan describes how people discursively position and align themselves and others with places through the use of place names and stories about particular places. This aligning is performed through the discursive and material connection of and specific identities to certain place practices and places, in her case the neighbourhood: 'The construction of a legitimate identity as a neighbourhood person relies on an alignment with a particular kind of identity created for the neighbourhood itself' (Ibid.:7). Emphasising oral communication of and about the place, Modan shows us how 'discourses in a community circulate and build up to create a public community story and a shared identity' (Ibid.:305). To Modan, this place identity correlate with a number of processes of spatial integration in which some individuals are included and others excluded. Discourses on what a place should contain and how it may be delimited both geographically and morally, in short its cultural meaning, work as to create distinctions and boundaries not only between places but also, and more importantly, between people. This create not only discursive, but also material effects:

'the way we talk about the places we live has material implications for how those places develop and change' (Ibid.:7).

Modan's case illustrates that places are not, as stated earlier, empty containers into which random people, practices and objects may be placed, but rather a negotiated and contested turfs where struggles unfold over access to space and over power to define what kind of place a given space is or should be. The concept of place identity is seen as created through a variety of ways of talking, acting and thinking *of* and *on* place hence discursively and materially constructing a certain unified codex for what or who ought to be – and *not* be – in that exact place and in what ways. In this working of delimitation and demarcation, processes of spatial, cultural and moral delimitation work as to decide who (i.e. which identity) ought to be where (i.e. in what place). Place identity is both linked to materiality, in its anchoring in actual physicality, bodily acts and performances, to ways of building, eating, speaking, as well as to an immaterial, representational side. Together and through the use of cultural values and notions, these resources work to sculpt and impact our appreciation of a food dish, our gazing upon a landscape, our enjoyment of a destination.

During my fieldwork in Zakopane, notions of place identity - of how the place was to be conceived and for whom - were constantly accentuated and discussed through and by a variety of actors and events on the tourism stage. As also mentioned in the later chapter 8, the Górale tradition perceives and defines identity closely in relation to metaphor of roots⁵³ and to specific economic and labour-related connections to the land and to the house (Ekströmer 1991, Pine 2001)⁵⁴. Ways of acting, talking and doing business were discursively negotiated through and connected with questions of origin and perspectives on landscape, local customs and the 'proper' relation between culture and tourism in an attempt to legitimise - or reject - certain things and practices. At the destination of Zakopane, the contestation over place identity was displayed in and through architectural styles, heritage preservation, building expansion and limitations and land use. Questions of how the place ought to be conceived and how this conception should be materialized was constantly negotiated not only by the 'usual suspects', namely tourist operators and tourists, but also by actors such as the local artist and architect, officials at the mayor's office and its various departments, the foreign entrepreneur or the 'business man' introduced in the previous chapter. This was done through a variety of discursive and concrete representations of the destination, but also through a constant and ongoing battle of defining the 'what, how and whom' of its place identity.

As a foreigner coming to Zakopane, you are instantaneously met with stories about the town; about local culture, about history and tourism. After only a few weeks talking to local residents, my voice recorder was filled with stories about the Górale that had roamed the mountain valleys and slopes with herds of sheep, of the first steel works in Kucnize, of the hardship and poverty of cultivating the land and of the derived intense migration to America. I was told of the first train connections to Zakopane and the growing numbers of

⁵³ Ethnologist Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal, private communication

⁵⁴ One may note that these place based identity markers are increasingly challenged and put under pressure by the phenomena such as tourism, European integration and global migration, ironically often characterised by their non-rootedness in specific, local environments.

tourists which followed and of a whole range of prominent Polish artists and scholars who gradually discovered and learnt to appreciate the Tatras and their inhabitants such as was the case with Dr. Chałubinski and his faithful companion Sabała, a gifted Górale musician. It soon became clear that in Zakopane, the connotations to Górale culture held an important position in how the place as a destination was represented, perceived and also performed. As was also shown in the very beginning of the thesis, Górale costumes, houses, artefacts and objects of art, as well as cultural and religious traditions and rituals were displayed, explained and praised in words and images in most of the printed and online tourist material. In tourism, a real or alleged affiliation with Górale culture was suggested or claimed through different musical, gastronomic, and architectural practices.

Through these different displays of behaviour, through talking, singing, building and dancing, the so-called 'Górale capital' of Zakopane was aligned with a 'Góralness' (Schneider 2006) in which the place, its physicality, inhabitants and visitors, as well as ways of acting and being were tied together. I started to wonder whether there was anything left to tell about this iconic town. It seemed as if everything had already been said and documented in innumerable books and ethnographies written on the Tatra Mountains, the Górale and the local way of living, building, dancing and playing music – and that this story was seamlessly passed into tourism branding and marketing in brochures and on websites, through tourism offers of 'traditional' dance evenings, sledge rides and bonfires and even in the souvenir shops and on outdoor markets selling sheep skin, woollen products, local regional foods and folkloristic objects.

Still, it was clear that things were obviously changing in Zakopane⁵⁵. This was visible on the mountain slopes, where ski lifts were erected and next to them hotels with international standards and well-known names. Could mass tourism be said to gradually be straining the local cultural to the point of extermination? As tourism souvenirs 'made in China', foreign ski tourists, MacDonald's and KFC increasingly dominated public space, local expressions, representations and claims of authenticity were certainly challenged. An ostentatious challenger was the international tourism actors increasingly discovering Zakopane as a market for tourism development. This was the case with Mark, who opened his English-language Zakopane website in 2003:

'Zakopane was our second site after Cracow. Once Cracow started to build we thought: well, let's try it. It was a test case for us. And Zakopane made sense because it was the closest and it was an obvious tourist destination. My first feeling was: well, that's silly! Because I had never even, I mean... I thought nobody overseas has heard about Zakopane. They were learning about Cracow, Warsaw and so on. But it soon became clear that that was also potentially a good place where people were desperate for information'.

⁵⁵ Although yes, some may ask whether things do not always change?

According to this English-Zimbabwean entrepreneur, his website filled out a large gap in providing information on Zakopane as well as on 22 other Eastern and Central European cities which his website concept also covers:

'There is just absolute dearth of quality information. There is very, very little good information about these cities. And I think in Poland there was this kind of extra need, if you like. It had been so poorly represented. Even though all these cities were so interesting, they had... nobody had gone about actually promoting them in a positive manner. When the wall started falling down, when Solidarity started rising. That's what we remember about Poland. When I was in Zimbabwe, you know, if anyone had said to me, what do think about Poland? I would have immediately said Solidarity, Gdansk, shipyards, grey, people with moustaches, that sort of thing, poor food.'

In posting information on Zakopane as a destination, Marks intentionally seeks to differ from a strategy, in which historical and cultural values are highlighted as the central aspect:

'So many web sites have that boring, you know: "Zakopane is located at the foot of the Tatra mountains" [*chanting*]. I just go to sleep as soon as I read the first sentence. And it's boring. All they are doing is... they are just doing that because they feel an obligation to put some information up. Actually every page at the web site should hold interesting stuff for the visitor and it should also be honest. So if we think that Zakopane in the middle of the summer is an absolute tourist nightmare down Krupówki [Street] we should say that, right? So people when they arrive are not surprised that it looks like Brighton or something like that'.

Although clearly displaying knowledge about the history of Zakopane, Duncan, a writer on Mark's website, challenges the claim to authenticity of the town and its inhabitants:

'It's kind of become a little bit a parody of itself. It's been a massive tourist destination for Polish people since the 19th century, so you know it's probably one of Poland's oldest tourist destinations in a sense. They have obviously worked out what the appeal is to visitors, including Polish visitors. And they've really kind of capped it of a bit with the mountain boots and the hats. You know every restaurant almost without exception is a sort of Górale restaurant with Górale musicians. So it is funny material [to write about]. If you take Zakopane too seriously you could be a bit disappointed. It's not like you are going to a remote mountain village and you're going to discover real... well you will discover real mountain people. But you'll also discover people pretending to be a hundreds years older than they are [laugh]'.

In their statements, Duncan and Mark intentionally seek to dissociate the information, writings and tourism products provided on their web site from the 'history/culture' version of Zakopane. Not only because it is

seen as 'boring' or as overexploited to the extent of becoming 'a parody', but also, as Mark puts it, because they 'don't try to ram something down [the tourist's] throats if they don't want to have it rammed down their throat'. Instead, they seek to provide 'honest' and 'interesting' information as well as what Mark believes is new knowledge to Western tourists. Based on his own experiences, Mark wishes to provide them with a new picture of what Zakopane, Poland and Eastern Europe is by emphasizing novel and quite different versions of the place:

'We tried to create, not an impression, but give a sense of the reality: that Poland is a vibrant and great place for young people as well as being all the history and the culture. That it actually is fun and fairly cheap for people to come here. And that the night life, its clubs and what have you rank. They compare with the rest of, certainly with Western Europe in terms of quality. So we try to project it as a funky place.'

This funky feel was also passed on and materialised through the maps (see the chapter 1 front page) which Marks company distributed in Zakopane, through the deliberate use of bright colours and a perky design. According to Mark, the website seeks to communicate 'a sense of reality'. However, using a 'funky feel' and pointing to price compatibility compared to other European ski resorts, as do also many other Western tourists and tourism entrepreneurs (see chapter 8 for another example), to brand Zakopane is clearly a strategy which contrasts to the place assets identified by local actors and Polish tourist. As actors taking part in the construction of the destination of Zakopane, Mark and Duncan's understanding is opposed by the Polish and local understanding of Zakopane as a place of Górale ('culture/history'), by characterising it as fun, funky, vibrant, fairly cheap, but also a little bit of a parody and hereby inauthentic, potentially boring (if culture and history is 'rammed' down tourists throats), and negatively associated - at least in a tourism context - with ideas of poor food, grey and shipyards.

In the above, tradition and history was contrasted and contested by other stories of Zakopane as a place of at least potential or necessary change. The two themes of transformation and continuity frame and underpin many descriptions of Zakopane. The constant relating or adapting to outside currents was opposed by the capability of staying the same in the minds of people. In the immediate analytical spotlight, the old, renowned Górale culture and the continuously developing tourism industry outlines a classic divide, a duality, between the traditional and modern, locals and outsiders. However, talking to people, walking around town, observing the city, other discrepancies, other differences and contestations, other analytical aspects not following the divisions of binary oppositions slowly unfolded. These show that a place is not always contained within restricted sets of images and discourses, but may also show itself as polyphonic, diverse and mutable, as will be shown in the next example of place representation and contestation.

Janosik is (not) the best YO

The origins of the name and character of Janosik is uncertain. Whether true or imagined, a majority of sources claim that this legendary 'Robin Hood' figure was in fact a Slovakian outlaw who roamed the Tatra

Mountains in the late 17th and early 18th century along with his crew of robbers⁵⁶. During time however, his person and character gradually became linked the guerrilla resistance in the mountainous parts of Southern Poland against oppressors from various invading and occupying forces. During the partition, Harnas, the Polish term for mountain robber, became a symbol of resistance. However, as seen in the famous 'Harnasie' ballet-pantomime completed in 1931 by composer Karol Szymanowski, a summer resident in Zakopane, the mountain robber was also linked to Górale culture in romantic terms. Later on, cultural products in the shape of books, movies and TV series (such as *Janosik* 1973 & 1974) used the character of Janosik as themes. Today, a new link to the Tatra robber has been made by the national commercial industry, in which the name and term of Janosik, but also the broader term of Harnas has been used as product names and brands, such as the 'Harnas beer', metaphorically relating to the Tatras or to various tourism products. Also, many local stores, tourist companies, hotels and restaurants make use of the link between Janosik/Harnas and the Tatra destination. As a consequence, Janosik has become part of the representation of the Tatras and Zakopane.



⁵⁶ On youtube.com a profusion of clips from TV series and movies exist more or less loosely based on Janosik. For such a clip accompanied by a very interesting discussion about the roots and origin of Janosik containing over 100 comments in Polish, Slovak and English, see http://www.youtube.com/comment_servlet?all_comments&v=AWKncYgOje4&fromurl=/watch%3Fv%3DAWKncYgOje4%26feature%3Drelated. This discussion clearly shows that the origins of Janosik are far from clear. It also displays the fact that for some people, it is still addressed with some importance, but for others also with humour or a perception of the constructed nature of this history.

As shown in the above illustrating, a photography of a board fence from my Zakopane neighbourhood, Janosik is not only incorporated into cultural and commercial products, but also occupies a place in the minds of local youngsters⁵⁷. A chalk tagger has enthusiastically drawn a slogan for his brigand hero in a somewhat eclectic style with multiple references to both a mythological character and to American hip hop, as the use of the English language as well as the closing 'YO' bares witness to. This 'glocal' message - referring to its simultaneous local and global references and language - could be seen in many places around the neighbourhood. On fences, but also on the road and even tree trunks. These chalk messages points to Janosik as being still today an important local figure, i.e. one that may be termed 'the best'. At the same time, the use of the English language introduces and links the mythical, national-romantic and commercial figure to a global cultural realm.

However and as seen on the picture his status is also challenged by another contemporary, but anonymous brigand adding a small and hardly noticeable 'not' to this tribute. By adding this, he subverts not only the role of Janosik, but also takes on the status of the place, where it has been written. As Janosik is not only a character in itself, but also an ethnic, cultural and product representation and icon with many references to place (the Tatras, Zakopane, the destination, Poland), challenging Janosik's status as 'the best' also challenges a specific place identity and ideology.

According to Jaworski and Thurlow (In press), the message, or rather messages, as two messages exist on that fence, may both be understood as an 'articulation of territory' (Ibid.:2). In such an articulation, communicational markings, in this case text, help to define or organize the meaning of spatial practices as well as the social practices enacted in place. Graffiti works as a sign *marking* the spatial boundaries, *identifying* a specific place and *re-imagining* the place. These three levels, coinciding with Lefebvres three spaces of conceived, perceived and lived space (see note 1 in this chapter), interact with one another, with the spaces of their emplacement, and with the social actors inhabiting these spaces in creating complex networks of meaning. In the first layer of graffiti articulating the territory, it is the local culture, through the invoking of the local hero, which is used to represent the place, hence marking, identifying and re-imagining (transgressing) it as a specific place holding a specific place identity. This is however challenged by the 'not', once again transgressing and re-imagining the place by rejecting Janosik as the best (although another hero is not put in his place).

Enacting place. Connecting constraint and construction

The example of Janosik is unquestionably a very modest and almost invisible contestation of place and place identity, one which has most probably already been washed away by rain and snow. It does illustrate however that places, as well as images, things and people connected to them, are rarely just that, but also representatives and manifestations of specific cultural and social systems of power. The example shows that fights for and over destination identities are not always centred on explicit tourism development and not

⁵⁷ I acknowledge that I here imply that the graffiti was drawn by a young individual, perhaps a young boy?

always expressed in its middle: in the ski lift, at the restaurant, in a brochure. These fights may also be unfolding in less accessible, less commercial, less prestigious areas, and voiced in more subtle ways, as in this case as graffiti on a fence in a destination suburb. Their modest expressions do not make them less important. It is therefore of importance to focus not only on explicit, binary discursive and material allegations on place, such as the ones existing between local cultural brokers and tourism promoters but also on alternative actors and more complex and less obvious expressions simultaneously allegories challenging and exhibiting the workings of the destination and its place identities.

When considering the aspects of power in relation to the places and spaces of tourism, one must direct attention not only to the abundant representations and images of the destination, but also to the practices literally taking place herein. Better understanding how tourism places are constructed, reproduced and reinforced enables us to better conceptualise and understand the place both as an opportunity and as a repertoire of constraints. According to Thrift, the performance approach disrupts the conventional understanding of power by actively involving individuals into its processes through sense making, acting and participating in and upon the world (Thrift 2004). This emancipating view (again) raises the essential question on the limits of the individuals' possibilities to influence its surroundings. Are tourism practices to be seen as regulated, directed and choreographed, or as a realm of improvisation and contestation? Can the individual shape the destination? Is the destination the limit, the possibility or the challenge of place or maybe a spatial actor itself? The destination is often portrayed through a number of drawing and captivating properties as a place so filled with the longing, yearning, hoping and dreaming of the tourist set out on a journey of pleasurable vacationing. At the same time, the destination may also be viewed as an intense battle field, a concentrate of conflicting motives and actions, of goals and objectives. These two perspectives upon the destination - as respectively a representation and a battlefield – display the intricate relations of material and immaterial, in the inseparable whole of branding, staging, constructing and performing the destination as a place.

This dualism also reveals the dynamics and complexities of places: 'Spaces are made of complex sets of relations so that any spatial "solidity" must be seen as an accomplishment, something that has to be achieved in the face of flux and instability. Space is made and it is made relationally' (Murdoch 2006). This 'double-edge' of relational space shows how spaces 'can facilitate movement and access; equally they can entrench confinement and exclusion. Thus, spatial relations are also power relations' (Ibid.:22). Spatiality brings forward the fact 'that differences are always spatialized, always positioned in space' (Ibid.:21). Understanding that the place is not an *a priori* but rather an *ad hoc* entity and that it subsequently has no pre-given or essential qualities leaves us with the question of how places are constructed as to be seen, represented, felt and acted in often very controlled and planned ways. In that sense, understanding a place not only involves seeing what is there, but also how the being of the place is identified and legitimated, how it came to be and what was left out in the process.

The examples deployed in this chapter were used as a way to demonstrate how the destination held a paradoxical status as an historic icon, as a set representation in tourism planning and as a place containing conflicting images, practices and discourses. As a researcher, I myself contribute to the process of continuous representing Zakopane as a place and tourism destination. It was therefore proposed in this chapter to include place as an analytical tool to better grasp the destination as spatially embedded. In including the spatial category into the analysis of the destination, I wish to focus on the way places are metaphorically, discursively and physically constructed, reproduced and reinforced in order to better grasp the place as both an opportunity and as a set of constraints. However, it is vital also to show, as in the above case, how different tourism actors continuously fight over power to represent and define what Zakopane is and not least what and whom should be included into it. The divergence in constructing, defining and representing places reveal that a place may be and may mean several things to different people, and hence demonstrate how places contain a distinct flexibility. A place *is* not, but is rather *enacted* (Moi 2002) as it is repetitively performed, negotiated, communicated, dreamt of, built and torn down. As is further elaborated in the following chapter, not only places, but also objects contribute to this enactment of the destination.

Chapter 7

Making the cheese. Object, ordering and enactment



Maintaining the identity of objects requires a continuing effort [and] over time [those identities] may change.'
(Mol 2002:43)

Many foreign tourists going to Zakopane travel through Cracow situated approximately 100 kilometres from the mountain destination. Cracow is one of Poland's larger cities. With its international airport servicing many low cost airlines it is a major and continuously growing destination for foreign tourists. Continuing to Zakopane, either as the end destination or as a planned or spontaneous part of a city holiday, one could choose to catch the train or bus, both of which are affordable although time consuming ways of accessing the destination. Before leaving Cracow, the tourists bound for Zakopane is exposed to the city's proximity to the mountains through the street vendors displaying and selling the cheese of oscypek. The oscypek is a salted and smoked cheese made of sheep's milk or a mix of sheep and cow milk. This traditionally spindle shaped cheese is traditionally and locally manufactured in the Tatra region. In Cracow, the cheese is sold from baskets or small stalls which increase in numbers and density as one approach the train and bus stations from the city's historic centre. Often mistaken for loafs of bread by foreigners because of their colour, ranging from light yellow to dark brown depending of its smoking, the oscypek could be seen as a trail of crumbs inviting and enticing us to follow its trail into the elevated distance. With its strange appearance, the cheese heralds a promise of the Tatras, of traditional ways of fabrication and of ingredients extracted from the lush mountain pastures encircling its, until now, most important area of sales: the tourist destination of Zakopane.

On exiting the train or bus at the arrival to Zakopane, the oscypek cheese is immediately visible as it is also sold from numerous stalls at the station. The cheese and its vendors compete with the local room renters for the attention of curious newcomers, hereby contributing to creating and shaping a first impression of the town (see the photo below). From the station area, the newly arrived tourist may choose to move on into the town centre, which in Zakopane's case is focused around the main shopping street of Krupówki. Here, a high number of oscypek stalls line the popular pedestrian street. Further down the street and entering the local foods and crafts market, the cheese is responsible for an important part of the selection on sale at the wooden stalls along side wool products, leather goods and sheep skin. Here, mostly elderly, but also younger women and the occasional male offer different locally produced cheeses, among which the oscypek is the most prominent. For most Poles, a visit to Zakopane necessarily includes the purchase of oscypek to family and friends back home. To tourists coming from outside of Poland, the massive display of cheese by vendors on the street often seems to offset curiosity and oftentimes leads to a purchase. Cheese is purchased for later consumption or eaten on place, usually 'au naturel' or in winter served warm with cranberry jam. As a more costly alternative, the oscypek may be consumed in local restaurants were hot and cold oscypek served with cold cuts or cranberry are regularly featured on the menu.



Selling osypek by the Zakopane bus station

By now the attentive reader might ask how such a contextualisation or *thick description* (Geertz 1973) of the display and vending of smoked sheep cheese may constitute a relevant part of an investigation into the destination construct and ordering. My collection of articles and statements as well as observations on this in Zakopane omnipresent cheese was initially a purely 'hobby'-like undertaking, not in any way aimed at occupying a place in the final thesis. However, as I gradually realised and will try to show in this chapter, tracing the ways the osypek was ordered and connected into different networks illustrates how a multiplicity of entities are used in assembling the destination. By describing the workings of a specific destination artefact, discourses and practices concerning the reality(/ies), representations, and materiality of the destination become traceable as they are continuously created. Hence, it is possible to describe not only the working of the object on the destination by following it around as a destination actor, but also to show how the relations between object and destination serve to enact a number of juxtaposed realities. This was the case with the osypek as it became highlighted, discussed and problematized during the time of my fieldwork. As I will try to show, it was physically and discursively transformed in connections to new and disparate networks.

In the following, I undertake an investigation of the osypek and its workings and role(s) in the destination construction. This attempt is based on seeing the object as enacted through the relations to other entities

such as discourses, nature, architecture, technology, culture and people which produce and generate a number of effects as they are connected, aligned and ordered. The status of the cheese, the object itself, is initially discussed by proposing different ways in which the object may be seen: as a region, a network, a fluid and a fire. The oscypek cheese is then narrated as part of different networks in order to demonstrate how a non-human actor may be seen as an active part of creating, shaping and enacting (and being enacted by) the tourism destination. The narratives of the oscypek cheese and its relations are informed by my fieldwork in the winter and summer of 2007 as well as by Internet and news searches and a literature study aiming at following the actor and tracing the changeable and mutable network alliances in which the cheese became involved. Through this, I identify four oscypek network alliances which order and enact the cheese as 'traditional, 'tourist, 'modern' and 'unique'. As I will try to show, the enactments not only engaged the cheeses in different (but in some ways partly connected) networks and practices, but also transformed the cheese as it enacted different 'hybrid' identities (Haraway, 1991) with various effects on the destination. Before moving to describing and analysing these networks, I will first introduce four ways of encompassing the oscypek and discuss how we may imagine the status and role of this specific object.

Object and ontology

In the article *Object lessons* John Law and Vicky Singleton (2005) explore the ways in which different directions within Science and Technology Studies (STS), particularly in ANT and post-ANT studies, have sought to deal with the complex and messy nature of objects. This undertaking is motivated by the experienced difficulties in providing a 'typical trajectory' for their own research object, the condition of alcoholic liver disease. According to Law and Singleton, the difficulty is rooted in a certain unwillingness to embrace object complexity in social science. This reluctance is represented by the first two of four ways of dealing with the difficulty of keeping the messy object in focus, namely the *technical*, the *managerial*, the *epistemological* and the *ontological*. The first two do not accept the object as messy, but rather seek to find answers to why the object might appear this way in social research. The first technical response reacts to 'mess' by pointing to methodological or other research failures or inadequacies. For instance, mess is seen as a result of 'bad research'. The managerial approach on the other hand seeks to make 'a world fit for study' (Law & Singleton 2005:333) and to produce objects fit to be known. In this reductionist perspective mess is seen as defying knowing, and hence produces mess as unknowable⁵⁸.

Contrary to the first two, the epistemological and ontological responses do not seek to ignore the messy object. Rather they look for ways in which mess might be known. The epistemological response explains the messy character of objects by how people apply different perspectives and attach different meanings to them. An example from STS is the *boundary object* (Star & Griesemer 1989) which 'take the shape that they do because they act as boundaries and crossing points between different social groups with different cultures [which are then] differently interpreted by those different groups, and this means that they are relatively flexible or multi-interpretable in character' (Law & Singleton 2005:334). This *flexibly translated*

⁵⁸ This relates to the discussion specifically concerning branding, addressed in chapter 4 on the hinterland and the knowledge created and made known herein.

reality is alternatively positioned against the ontological perspective in which reality – and by this also objects – are *acted into being*.

One thing is how social science seeks to deal with (or evade) complex and messy objects, another is how to characterise and grasp these complexities. In this next endeavour, Law and Singleton point to four ways of accounting for objects: as region, network, fluid and fire. The ‘region’ object reflects a classic material and physical understanding of the object as volume in three-dimensional Euclidean space (Ibid.:335)⁵⁹. This corresponds to the technical and managerial approaches to (or rather rejection of) complexity. A second way of understanding objects is through the stable networks of relations, in which it becomes an *immutable mobile* moving around while at the same time keeping its shape in a physically, but also functional manner. Control depends upon and is secured through the simultaneous immutability and mobility of objects; when objects ‘are able to hold their relational shape as they circulate around the globe, then long-distance control is a possibility’ (Ibid.)⁶⁰.

Arguably, the oscypek cheese could be perceived as such an immutable mobile, as an object which travels while still remaining the same identifiable cheese: down the mountain pastures to Zakopane, to Cracow, to the tourists cities or countries of origin and, as we will see, further on to international food fairs and to shops in Europe and the USA. Yet, it is also an object which remains the same only as it is recognised (in both senses of the term) as oscypek. It is only within a network of relations that the existence or visibility of the object is made possible. In addition to perceiving the oscypek as a network of relations one must also look at the network of practices in which it is embedded and at the effort made to sustain and stabilise its network. Without such enactment, the object network dissolves and the objects cease to be ‘the objects that they were’ (Ibid.:337). But how does this transformation happen, and what does it say about the object ontology?

In order to respond to these questions, Law and Singleton raise two points of critique, similar to and drawn from the more general critique raised of ANT concerning the invisible work carried out in the network and the networks claimed immutability (see chapter 2). By focusing on network stability, the arrangements making them possible are obliterated. Instead ‘we need to attend as much to the mutability of what lies invisibly below the waterline as to any immutability that rises above the surface’ (Law & Singleton 2005:337). Thus Law & Singleton propose to see the object as a *mutable mobile*, not containing a core of stability, but instead characterised by the fluidity of its relations, by which it ‘flows and *gently* changes shape, bit by bit’ (Ibid.:338). This is suggested by de Laet and Mol (2000) in their description of a Bush water pump in which “‘the pump’ keeps going, but the work that is keeping it going is largely unremarked, and [...] that work has the effect of reconfiguring the relations that keep the pump going’ (from Law & Singleton 2005:338, see chapter 9 for a more thorough discussion of the text). Through this flow, the object both changes and remains the same. However, in order to remain the same the pump simultaneously depends on its capacity to change. As I

⁵⁹ Also see the discussions in chapter 6, which in a similar way criticises a physical ‘container’ view upon space

⁶⁰ John Law has elaborated on the concept of immutable mobiles in the article *On the Method of Long Distance Control: Vessels, navigation and the Portuguese Route to India* (1986)

show, this also applies to the oscypek in which its adaptability and abilities to comply with new demands become necessary for its continuation as oscypek. However, as will also be shown, transformation does not only happen in tranquil flows, but also, as suggested by Law and Singleton, in manners more resembling fire than fluid.

The metaphor of fire is used to emphasize not the continuity, which is implied in fluidity, but rather the disjunction of absence and presence and of otherness, which constitute the fire object: 'We cannot understand objects unless we also think of them as sets of present dynamics generated in, and generative of, realities that are necessarily absent. Such objects are transformative, but the transformations are not the gentle flows discussed above in fluid objects [...] they take the form of jumps and discontinuities' (Law & Singleton 2005:343). Following the post-structuralist device that not all can be brought to presence and expanding the critique of ANT's inability to account for invisible work, Law and Singleton argue that the object is constituted not only by and in its visible presence. Its constitution also requires a set of absences: "the present object implies realities that are *necessarily* absent, that *cannot* be brought to presence; that are othered' (Ibid.). In this understanding the authors conclude, 'an object is a pattern of presences and absences' (Ibid.) not only constituted through and depending on its visible and present relations, but also on a generative and absent otherness.

This approach raises the ontological point also found with Annemarie Mol in her book *The Body Multiple* (2002) in which it is argued that the difference between objects is not a difference in perspective. Rather, it is the *object* which is different, because of how it is enacted in multiple practices. According to Law and Singleton (2005) 'each object is made in a series of absences, but [...] *each is made differently*' (Ibid.:346). The benefit of viewing the object in such a discontinued and fragmented manner is that it allows us to include a number of incompatible realities in our analysis of the object and of the social. This will become apparent in the case of the oscypek, where differing discourses and practices converge, but also conflict – or, using a different term, *other* one another – in ways which practically rules out one cohesive, unifying or reconciled object. One of the main point regarding what Law and Singleton term *radical ontology* is that the object does not *need* to be cohesive, as this ontology is capable of dealing with complex, heterogeneous and only partially connected and coherent entities. On the other hand, one may ask; by insisting on such a radical ontology, where differently enacted objects are not just partly overlapping but *mutually exclusive*, do we also exclude the possibility of bridging the differences? Do we mute or otherwise enable the possibility of dialogue? What would this radical ontology entail for the possibilities of not only knowing and describing, but also experiencing, managing or communicating the destination? Before I address these questions, I will first turn to the concrete description of the oscypek, its ordering and enactment.

In the next, the oscypek is considered as an actor in the destination network. Arguably, the alcoholic liver disease investigated by Law & Singleton and oscypek are two very different issues. Oscypek is not 'an object of an unconventional kind', nor is it one which is 'difficult to recognize [...] within some of the conventions of social science method' (Ibid.:340). It appears as far less important and as uncontested – after

all it is just a cheese. But perhaps it is exactly its 'uncomplicated', taken for granted or almost comical nature as a 'straight forward' object which make it relevant and necessary to investigate by showing how some things are brought to the fore while others are othered. It is considered how the deployment of the oscypek actually shapes and is shaped by different destination realities by looking at how the oscypek is entangled and enrolled into a range of representations as modes of ordering, which 'recursively perform themselves through different materials – speech, subjectivities, organizations, technical artefacts' (Law 2000:23). Through the four narratives of object enactment, the aim is not only to show the object and its effects and workings within these modes of ordering, but also to discuss on a larger scale how the object affects and is affected by the destination through a number of transformations, translations and enactment.

Traditional cheese

'[The Oscypek cheese] is an important part of the shepherding tradition with a history going back to the XV century. For hundreds of years it was produced in the mountains by local shepherds.'
(Gorlach et al. 2006:43)

In attempting to arrange the narrative of the oscypek cheese in a chronological sequence, the 'first' oscypek would be the traditional oscypek, which traces its roots more than 600 years back in time. Although its relations have undoubtedly been subject to change since this time, a traditional cheese may still be claimed today. It is compiled of a specific set of relations linking the oscypek, place and local practices which are described in the following as part of a local mode of ordering. It is part of a network linking the Górale heritage of shepherding and traditional cheese making to the representation and reality of the specific locality and culture of the Tatra Mountains. In this set of relations, the 'traditional cheese' is enacted by connecting and referring to certain actors and materialities, to certain ways of spatial appropriation and socio-economic patterns, to certain practices and traditions and to certain discourses and enactments, which will now be more thoroughly examined.

A most important actor in the enactment of the traditional oscypek is the *bacówka*, the shepherd's hut, typically located on the mountain pastures surrounding the town (and beyond). It is in the *bacówka* that the oscypek cheeses were, and still to some degree are, produced. Many ethnographic accounts exist of the century old oscypek fabrication process taking place in the Górale shepherd's hut. These accounts describe how the milk processing is initiated after the morning milking, where it is mixed in a wooden vat with the ripened milk from the night before. The milk is then renneted, nowadays most commonly with commercial rennet (a new actor in the traditional network). After the cheese mass is mixed, hot water is added. The curd is then transferred and moulded into a measurer to secure cheeses of similar size, also impacting the shape, curd grains solidification and creation of a typical cheese structure. Lumps of cheese are extracted from the measurer and manually kneaded to squeeze out the whey and is then dipped in hot water. It is subsequently hand-moulded and shaped, repeatedly being scalded and kneaded. It is then placed in brine for a day. After

drying, the cheese is placed on shelves above the constantly burning fire place. It is ready for sale and consumption after about a week⁶¹.



The inside of the bacówka. From <http://www.flickr.com/photos/kingary/2637130488/>

Today, many of these huts are located along tourist hiking trails in and around the Tatra National Park, giving tourists not only the possibility of closely observing the huts, but also to purchase and taste the oscypek manufactured on-site. The picture below depicts the interior of such a hut where I went to buy an oscypek during a hike in the Tatra National Park. A man and a woman sit outside the hut but at the approach of a customer, they get up and enter the house, pointing to the cheeses on display. The wooden walls and ceiling are blackened by the smoke from a fire slowly burning inside the chimneyless hut, and the air smells warm and burnt. Apart from the slow fire burning, there is no sign of actual cheese production on site, but on a shelf, plastic trays are filled with larger and smaller cheeses. Next to them lies a bag containing other smaller plastic bags for the customers to carry their cheese in. On the wall behind them various, mainly wooden artefacts are displayed: a crucifix, utensils for cheese manufacturing, a couple of shepherd's walking sticks and a sheep bell along with a plastic clock and wooden carvings representing a *harnas*, an iconic mountain robber (see chapter 6). Also various postcards featuring Tatra scenery are pinned up on the wall. Taking

⁶¹ For a demonstration of the local practice of oscypek manufacturing by the producing shepherd in a shepherd's hut (and an explanation in Górale dialect), see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSIEO6Q_KCY&NR=1

pictures inside the house in allowed. The photogenic wall display might even lead to conclude that it is even encouraged. After an eventual sampling and acquisition, both customer and seller exit the hut into the sun and fresh air.



Apart from the *bacówka*, other important actors work within the set of relations which enact the traditional *oscypek*. Such network contributors are ethnographers as well as food culture researchers, who through descriptions of traditional fabrication frame and connect past and present traditional cheese production to a larger audience. An example is Goralach et al. (2006), in which the *oscypek* is contextualised and normatively defined in the following way:

'[The *oscypek*] is an important part of the shepherding tradition with a history going back to the XV century. For hundreds of years it was produced in the mountains by local shepherds. What is important, the cheese should be handmade of non-pasteurized milk in a mountain shed. The recipe is passed on from generation to generation in an unwritten form, which makes the final product unique for each shepherd who made it. As local highlanders say "there is one technique of production and many recipes." What can differ is the proportion of ingredients, temperature and time of smoking, and final size and consistency. What is common for all *oscypek* cheeses is the shape, which should be fusiform. In its original form, *oscypek* is produced and eaten in the summer season (from May to September/ October)' (ibid:43).

A number of prescriptive requirements are listed in the above: how, where and by whom the cheese should be produced, what it should consist of, during what time of the year it should be produced and consumed etc. The process is to be manual, based on inherited knowledge and tradition. The product is to be non-uniform, yet fusiform.

As an actor within a traditional oscypek network, the cheese links the bacówka and its physical presence and practices to ethnographic descriptions of local heritage, traditional shepherding and manual cheese fabrication. It is furthermore linked, as was suggested by my own purchase, to a partially tourism based economy, by either direct sale or delivery to local restaurants. These sales relations are (mostly) characterised by a non-formal, direct and personal relation. By following the oscypek and its connections, a number of entities and properties are accentuated and brought into play: traditional fabrication utensils, embodied skills, local and traditional production and retail practices connected to shepherding but also a tourism based economy, a number of staged representations of the Tatras, where the cheese becomes a symbol of heritage and tradition as well as being a local food product. The cheese is connected to specific places – that of the Tatras and that of the bacówka. Being able to produce and sell this traditional oscypek is dependent on a specific set of relations by and in which the cheese becomes identifiable as a product of local heritage practices and as a local specialty, one which is unique to that exact place and to specific Górale traditions. However, this particular ordering and enacting the oscypek is being challenged by other ways of ordering, as further illustrated below.

Tourism cheese

According to Simoni (2007), 'tourist destinations are often associated with emblematic "things" that do not just represent, but actively help constitute them' (Ibid.:2). For Zakopane, the oscypek must be one such object as the destination's most popular tourism food product and as 'the best known example of regional food in Poland' (Gorlach et al. 2006:43). This position derives from the above network of the traditional cheese. However, in connecting with tourism, the cheese gradually changes. As already described, sporadic traces of oscypek are found already at the foothill of the Tatras, in Cracow, increasing in intensity along the road side as the tourist approaches and enters the mountains. Its trace leads us into Zakopane, where the cheese is sold to the vast amount of tourists from outdoor places of sale ranging from a humble plastic table to more advanced cheese vending 'huts' in a mock Zakopane style.

This strong outdoor presence is not only explained by the fact that the selling in shops of the unpasteurised cheeses was made illegal from the early 1950s until 2002 (Ibid.:46), but also shows the changing enactment of the oscypek as it has been linked gradually, but also energetically to a growing tourism industry. As a consequence of the great demand for a vending spot, the local government selects vendors based on a lottery taking place each year under considerable national press attention. An example of the changing relations of sale from the traditional to the tourist cheese is the vending booth pictured below, which is

constructed in a manner vaguely resembling, but unquestionably referring to the traditional Zakopane style⁶². A plastic sign next to a print symbol of an oscypek is spelled *Zapraszamy na oscypki* (we welcome you to oscypek). On display, protected by a plastic screen, are a number of oscypek in varying shapes and sizes, all with price tags identical to the ones in the many other booths along the street. The sales situation between buyer and seller is commonly direct, anonymous and fleeting in character. The possibility of checking the manufacturing procedures, quality or origin of the product is limited (although some booths have a sign indicating the locality of production). This however does not seem to be of concern for the majority of tourists and does not affect the massive sales of the vendors lucky enough to gain access to Krupówki.



A cheese stall on Krupówki Street

The oscypek which we find on display on Krupówki Street is a different object from the one found in the *bacówka*. This cheese is a product manufactured, sold, and marketed in the context of mass tourism, upon which it is highly dependent. It is 'the base of a large and diversified production and retail sector' (Ibid.:43) and part of an efficient production and distributing network, which manages to sell oscypek and other, 'tourism adapted' cheese varieties to thousands of tourists each day. (See the picture on p.115 for a

⁶² See chapter 8 for a further introduction to this style of building.

example of a physical transformation of the cheese, which has literally been place branded) As a local icon and well-known 'prop' to Zakopane, the town is similarly reliant on the oscypek as part of its representation as a Tatra mountain destination and as the capital of Górale (food) culture.

According to Gorlach et al., the link between tourism and oscypek production was intensified during the 1990s, as the area experienced a boom in especially winter tourism. Coinciding with this development in tourism, shepherding was struck by a dramatic decrease in the number of ewes (from 250.000 to 50.000) as a result of falling wool prices, the abrogation of state payment and an overall rise in production costs. This led to a predicament in which a rising customer base was opposed by a limited availability of sheep's milk, the primary product component of oscypek. The collision of supply and demand led to a *commercialization of the tradition* (Gorlach et al. 2006) in which sheep milk was replaced with cow milk, hereby ensuring a sufficient and year-round milk supply. The cheese production was no longer tied to the shepherd's huts and to original techniques and was increasingly moved to conventional farms. This has resulted today in a large and decentralized sector for home oscypek production predominantly located, as is also the case on the retail side, within the sphere of the black market economy. As a consequence, Gorlach et al. estimate that only 10% of the overall oscypek production currently takes place in shepherd's huts using traditional methods.

Just as the traditional oscypek 'defines and performs a version of agency' (Law 1994:81) as a specific and locally based mode of ordering, this next 'tourism oscypek' enact and is enacted by new practices and relations offsetting a number of changes in its related agency and materiality. New producers, sellers and buyers appear as well as new settings for the production and sale of the cheese. In this new set of relations, a 'false', yet also 'popular' (Gorlach et al. 2006:45) cheese is created and enacted through a coupling of mass tourism and new host-guest relations, economic necessity, an increase in production and in tourist demands, small local farms, the adding or replacement of cow milk to sheep's milk, modern production and delivery systems along with infrastructure facilitating and securing delivery as well as a lottery aimed at regulating local cheese sale points.

Following Law and Singleton (2005), this new 'present' object of the tourism cheese also implies a set of absences (Ibid.:342). One such othered absence is the shepherding and the shepherd hut which have disappeared (although only partially, as some cheeses still contain some sheep milk) and have been replaced with production sites and processes no longer visible or accessible to consumers. However, the generative capacity of the *necessarily absent realities* becomes visible as the idea of local food culture and shepherd tradition is still implied in or even motivating for the purchase of the tourism oscypek by tourists. Hence, the local oscypek both help enact and is othered by the tourism oscypek. The oscypek displays itself as 'an object that juxtaposes and transforms discontinuous realities that cannot be held together or brought to presence' (Ibid.:344). Yet another enactment of the cheese which both challenges and supports the tourism cheese is the modern cheese presented in the following.

Modern cheese

The two above networks specify different relations between the oscypek, tourism and local practices. Although these connections are certainly strong and influential actors in enacting the oscypek, other actors and relations also engage with the oscypek. From having followed the cheese from the mountain pastures and the shepherd huts down to Krupówki and further along the road to Cracow as a traditional, local Tatra product, the oscypek here travels into the offices of politicians and officials, to Warsaw and Brussels and into the laboratory. The actors which I will address in the next contribute to enacting a cheese which is safe and homogenous, one which complies with measures and standards set by a larger national or European system. It is a cheese which may easily be mass-produced, managed and controlled as requirements change as noted on this webpage:

‘The way *oscypek* is made today is a long way from the demands of Brussels. If Poland is to join the Union and if *oscypek* is to be offered for sale, its production process must change’⁶³.

By following the modern cheese, as I have termed it, and its workings outside of its immediate ‘local’ field of operation on the mountain pastures, on main street and in restaurants of Zakopane, the cheese suddenly links to policies, to implementations of quality standards, to EU circular letters and to discourses of traditional versus modern cheese manufacturing and of hygiene in electronic and print debates, not only in the Polish language, but increasingly in English. In scientific publications, such as Drozd’s (2001) *Quality of the Polish traditional mountain sheep cheese ‘oscypek’* and Roborzynski et al.’s (2000) *Importance of regional milk products in mountain sheep farming*, new ways of seeing and describing the oscypek appears in which it undergoes, for instance, a

‘two-month physicochemical, microbiological and sensory analyses’ seeking to detect eventual presence of coagulase-positive streptococci, the growth of molds and bacteria, the presence of salmonella rods and increased coli titre [in which the tested cheeses] were found to meet the hygienic requirements’ (Roborzynski et al. 2000).

The parameter of cleanliness has now become a way of measuring and evaluating the oscypek. A whole new set of relations was established between the cheese, hygiene and control. Hence, the cheese once again mutates, enacting realities, bringing things to the fore, such as hygiene, and others to absence. A predicted future absence could be the vending stall. One may wonder whether the sale of oscypek can continue to take place by the cheese stalls on the street as they no longer satisfies requirements. While regretting the changes caused by the creation of a new ‘modern’ cheese, Grolach et al. (2006) account for some of the logics behind this change, which apart from laboratory control also involves new mechanical modes of production, pasteurisation and new packaging:

⁶³ http://elt.britishcouncil.org.pl/elt/r_oscypek.htm

'Of course, the use of machines and vacuum packages means a drastic departure from the traditional pattern of oscypek. Above all this involves the use of not only cow's milk but also pasteurized milk. Although highlanders say "such a product is anything but oscypek" there are still clients who buy it⁶⁴. One of the reasons for this success is the fact that dairies can guarantee food security. Products are labelled, hermetically packed and regularly tested. The name of the producer assures traceability. And last but not least supermarket-type oscypek is very accessible' (Ibid.:45).

As the cheese leaves its 'traditional' local environment, one other significant reason is given to improve certification – the customers' unfamiliarity with a 'genuine' product: Although it is fairly easy for a local consumer from this region to distinguish between the authentic and the *counterfeit* version, this may prove to be a more cumbersome task for consumers in other parts of the country⁶⁵.

In the above, the oscypek is enacted as a 'modern' agent related to a number of discourses, arrangements and practices working within a network linking quality insurance, laboratory testing, procedures implementation, plastic wrapping, refrigeration and national or international distribution. The agency of the 'modern' oscypek network stands in contrast to a description of the cheese in a 'traditional' context in which heritage and locality played an important role, but also to the tourism cheese, where demand and sales became the driver for mass production. In the 'modern' case, it is security, standardisation and the possibility of regulations which are sought implemented and secured through a number of traceable standard applications of hygiene and authenticity. As might be expected, many producers and small scale local retailers fear the increasing demands of hygiene control and traceability, which complicate or even risk to make illegal both the traditional production in the *bacówka* and the outdoor sale of unrefrigerated and unpacked 'fake' cheese. As noted by Fonte (2008) 'small producers [of oscypek cheese] risk social and economic exclusion with the implementation of certification because they find it difficult to adhere to hygiene norms or because their production techniques are not considered 'authentic' and are not included in the production protocol' (Ibid.:11). These processes of exclusion are the reason why looking at the networks and constant working and effects of the identity of objects are crucial. The narratives of differently enacted objects tell about what is absent and how this absence is performed in a specific network. In the case of the modern oscypek, it may be seen as both a product of and a challenger to the two above enactments of oscypek. Its enactment is based on a consumer demand created by the increasing popularity and valorisation of the oscypek, which again is traced back to increasing tourism in the Tatras. The modern cheese both makes use of and others the local, for instance in naming an oscypek-like cheese 'scypek' (Gorlach et al. 2006:45).

All methods, including this attempt at narrating different ordering of the cheese, create otherness (Law & Singleton 2005:349). Furthermore, as noted by Law (1994), divisions between ordering modes are

⁶⁴ For a discussion on food as a driver and inhibitor in tourism, see Cohen & Avieli (2001)

⁶⁵ (<http://www.american.edu/TED/polish-cheese.htm>)

empirically based, subject to both diversity and change and could always be otherwise (Ibid.:82). This equally applies to my attempt of narrating different versions of the enacted object of oscypek. These narrated representations perform their own divisions and distributions, their own othering (Law & Benschop 1997). The narratives could have been different, further elaborated and more carefully branched out. By now, new hybrid enactments could have appeared. As all objects are both present and absent, 'we cannot know or tell [these objects] in all their otherness' (Law & Singleton 2005:349). Although a number of strategies of ordering or networks involve the oscypek (see for instance Goralach et al. 2005), I have chosen to emphasise one more narrative in which the cheese once again is transformed, enacting a different reality by travelling even further down the pastures of the hill sides of Podhale and relating to the destination in new ways..

Unique cheese

In the following, the cheese is enacted as unique and as a strategic tool to market and brand the tourism region and product of Zakopane. This enactment might be seen as a hybrid of the three former by translating, transforming and othering some of their logics, strategies and practices. In this network, once again, the cheese is connected to new, but also aforementioned entities and practices. In this process, discourses of heritage and authenticity become entangled with new ways of connecting the local brand and brand to new business opportunities through food fairs, catalogues and other material, textual or discursive tourist representations, a different physical appearance and a radically inflated cost.

At the time of my first fieldwork in January to April 2007, the oscypek was at the centre of special local and national attention for yet another reason other than its traditional and tourism related qualities. The Polish Association of Sheep and Goat Breeders had applied to the European Commission for inclusion on the exclusive 'Protected Designation of Origin' (PDO) list of regional EU products. By securing the oscypek on this list, the cheese would be added

'to a 161-cheese list that includes internationally-renowned names such as France's Roquefort, Italy's Gorgonzola or England's Blue Stilton'⁶⁶.

The oscypek would then become the first Polish product and only the second product from the eight new Central and Eastern European EU member states (after the Budejovicke beer from Czech Republic) to join

'an 800-name EU list which also includes specialities such as Italy's Parma Ham, a swathe of olive oils from Greece and Spain, and 12 types of German beer'⁶⁷, (Ibid.).

⁶⁶ www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1203001321.16/

⁶⁷ In spite of high expectations, the oscypek did not make it first. This was due to an outbreak of a transnational cheese war, in which Slovaks claimed ownership to the origin of what they term Oštiepok. This conflict, in which Slovakia used its EU veto power to block the inclusion of the oscypek, slowed down the decision making process to the point that the oscypek was passed by another Tatra sheep cheese, Bryndza Podhalanska as first Polish product to get the Protected

This lengthy, but significant process was passed on in a number of local, national and even international newspapers and magazines, as well as on the internet reporting on the cheeses' way to becoming Poland's first PDO product. During this process, the linking of a number of new and former-established entities, discourses and practices were yet again enacting a different 'unique' oscypek. These were entities such as local and national heritage, the 'globalisation of local food' (Gorlach et al. 2006:48) and new ways of staging, representing, telling and branding the cheese. New actors include both local and European authorities as well as shepherds associations. Like with the modern cheese, issues of control were at stake, although in this case these were more concerned with procedures of authentication, i.e. how counterfeit might be avoided, than with hygiene. As noted by Andrzej Gasienica Makowski, head of the Tatra region, when first commenting on the EC decision:

'We should [...] take care of the procedural side now so that they would not revoke the first certificate of regional product obtained by our cheese if, for example, there were too many counterfeited products or in case we failed to implement the procedures'⁶⁸.

While praising the advantages for traditional producers, Henryk Wujec of the Polish Chamber for Regional and Local Products also points out the risks of counterfeit in the new setting:

'A protected regional product can become an incredibly strong advertising medium and bring considerable benefits. [The traditional producers] must also ensure that producers who make fake Oscypek cheese withdraw from the market... Fake products, like Oscypek made of cow's milk or cheese dyed with tea, could cause irreparable damage to the product's image'⁶⁹.

In working towards and subsequently obtaining the PDO label, the oscypek was linked to an international market. The increased internationalisation of the unique cheese is announced by the external service of the Polish Radio in February of 2008:

'Starting from March the genuine Polish oscypek - with the special EU and Protected Designation of Origin stamps - will be available in many groceries all over Europe'⁷⁰.

Designation of Origin stamp. However, after a fierce and bitter struggle, Slovakia decided to drop its opposition. For details, see www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1203001321.16/, www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/news/artukul75905.html, news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6334707.stm and www.eurotopics.net/en/search/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE14478-Poland-and-Slovakia-in-dispute-about-EU-certificate-for-cheese

⁶⁸ www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/news/artukul_75905.html

⁶⁹ http://www.eurotopics.net/en/presseschau/archiv/archiv_results/archiv_article/ARTICLE13938-EU-confers-Polish-Oscypek-trademark-protection

⁷⁰ www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/news/artukul_75905.html

In its new international network, the oscypek is now branded and marketed as a unique product as part of a high quality brand, the PDO. The oscypek and its producers are now parts of a *European brand* competing on a global stage, as illustrated by a statement of a European agriculture spokesperson:

'We think that it's very important that European farmers and retailers can really make use of the advantages that Europe has. We live in a globalised society where there are a lot of cheap food producers around the world that are providing a lot of competition for all people and if you've got this quality logo you can really use it as a marketing and branding tool to improve your sales and to prove to your consumers that this is a really high quality and unique product' (ibid.).

As a 'high quality and unique product' the oscypek gains access and travels to many new places, such as the Slow Food fair in Turin, where it is celebrated as 'the star of the show'⁷¹, or to a Norwegian food website on seafood, where it is proposed as a stuffing for fried herring(!)⁷². The oscypek is no longer a traditional or tourism product specifically linked and associated to the Tatras and to the destination. Neither is it a nationally distributed massproduct. It has now become a unique and European branded food product. This transformation however is not only one which addresses and is turned towards the outside. The valorisation of the oscypek also takes place locally, hereby seeking to secure new generations of shepherds and small-scale producers which are required in order to keep the brand alive. For instance, the yearly *Oscypek festival* has been held since 2003. During this festival, oscypek and other cheeses are displayed, cooked, tasted and sold. According to Pawel Pieczarka, the host of the *Oscypek Fest*, another mountain cheese festival, one main reason for organising this type of festival is 'to preserve the tradition and the technology of oscypek production. The festival is supposed to encourage young people to care about regional customs'⁷³.

As we see in the above, the unique cheese network is simulataneously drawing on a local and international network enacted by multiple sets of practices, discourses and materialities. As noted by Goriach et al. (2006) on the description of what they call the *neo-traditional oscypek in EU realities*, the cheese is 'without a doubt one of the most recognizable symbols of the Tatra Mountains and the town of Zakopane' (Ibid.:47). In order to substantiate this claim, they refer to how it increasingly appears on postcards and other promotion material on the Tatras and Zakopane. They further note that

'on the one hand oscypek cheese is being promoted, but on the other hand, it, in turn, serves to promote the whole area. This dual relation can be observed in the example of the contest that has been organized by the local authorities in order to create the project of packaging for the oscypek cheese. The primary aim was to get the cheese packed so it could be used as a kind of sophisticated gimmick in promotional campaigns of the region (mainly in the international

⁷¹ http://www.theecologist.org/pages/archive_detail.asp?content_id=204

⁷² <http://www.seafoodfromnorway.com/page?id=104&key=24189>

⁷³ <http://www.krakowpost.com/articles/2007/09/27/550.html>

arena). However, in the longer perspective, when the new packaging will be introduced on the larger scale it will be another factor in increasing the cheese's popularity' (Ibid.).

By following the actor into what I have termed a 'unique' set of relations, I tried to show how both object and relations are ordered and connected in new ways. In seeking to engage with the European PDO-list, a number of new requirements, discourses and practices were being linked to the oscypek, which was now working within a context of product and tourism development positioned under EU auspices and towards regional branding. However, by virtue of necessity, the creation of the 'unique' cheese also required a local valorisation (Fonte 2008), which again created new practices and events such as the oscypek festival⁷⁴.

The entering of the oscypek on the list was clearly a controversial matter, which I already experienced on my very first trip to Podhale shortly after Poland entered the EU in 2004. On a visit to a bacówka, local inhabitants voiced their concern of the new requirements to obtain EU accreditation. It was claimed that 'EU requirements', not further specified, would endanger the cheese of extinction or at least threatened its authentic way of production. According to Fonte (2008), this concern is justifiable, since 'when the certification process is not controlled by local actors, or at least when local actors do not participate in the process with a recognised equal status, certification may lead to the expropriation of local knowledge and the benefits deriving from its valorisation by external actors, rather than integration or synthesis of local and scientific knowledge.' (Ibid.:214). This however did not prove to be the case with the oscypek. In successful enactment of the 'unique' cheese by connecting to a range of new European and tourism related entities during the last five years or so, rights of 'ownership' to the cheese are now being turned over to the traditional producers, the shepherds. However, as this 'unique' cheese gains ground and as regulations to ensure the protection of the denomination of origin are implemented, one may inquire into the consequences for the producers of 'tourist' cheese and for local economy. Once again, realities intersect, mutually excluding and precluding one another.

Cheese heterogeneity and cheese that travels

The four cheese narratives in the above show how objects are shaped in and by the relations through which they connect with and in a given network. The objects are held together through their performance as specific and reality shaping entities. Each of these networks contain different physical aspects, places, settings, discourses and resources which enact the cheese as traditional, tourism, modern and unique. In relation to the network in which it is engaged, the cheese is produced, marketed and shaped differently, hence revealing itself as a creative object, that 'cannot be narrated smoothly from a single location' (Law & Singleton 2005:348). Depending on the network to which the cheese is connected, it changes shape – from a local, hand-made fusiform to a mass produced cow-milk 'imitation', back to a 'real' and laboratory-controlled spindle and on to a globally marketed, PDO-labelled and unique brand. In the complex and interrelated processes of enacting the four realities, a number of things are othered, meaning that they are

⁷⁴ For further discussion of the relation between cultural festivals and regional identity, see Liburd and Derksen (2009)

both absent, but (in some cases) also required and generative in their absence, turning the object into being 'entities or processes that juxtaposes, distinguishes, make and transform absences and presences. They are made in disjunction' (Ibid.:344).

An example of such a discontinuous, absence, yet present entity is hygiene. In the first and second narrative hygiene had no part in how the object was enacted. However, as the oscypek became enrolled in the 'modern' network, by being connected to the laboratory and compared to other cheeses and food stuffs, its inner bacterial properties started to gain importance. The hygienic aspects of the modes of producing and selling the cheese become a matter of questioning, as seen with this American blogger having visited a *bacówka*:

'True, it is a little frightening — from hygiene's point of view — how they make the cheese'⁷⁵.

Also, a whole new range of questions and concerns emerged in the press, in guide books and subsequently also between tourists and tourists and vendors on the Krupówki Street. Some of the questions I heard being asked (or asked myself) were 'how clean and safe was it?', 'is it safe to eat unrefrigerated cheese from the street stand in summer?', 'is the cheese really smoked or just dipped in tea to obtain its dark colour?' (a rumour claimed by many) or 'is oscypek sold in winter genuine even though sheep do not give milk at that time?'. The questions not only display growing uncertainty and confusion as new demands conflict with concrete object and destination realities, but they may also be seen as a sign of changing practices. Interference between the different networks means that when one thing, as hygiene, seems to be at stake, a number of other realities are also invoked by being either included or excluded, such as production and selling, traditional ways of life, pasteurisation and refrigeration.

Another issue and concept which intersects presence and absence is authenticity. After returning home from my fieldwork, I continued desk research on the oscypek, its history and controversies. It was not before this time that I realised how small a percentage of the oscypek was produced in the 'authentic' way. This made me think back on my own experience in the shepherds hut that day on the mountain. Indeed, the hut was a *bacówka* and a small fire was burning. But no production took place and most of the cheeses on sale were smaller oscypek-varieties, not the traditional ones. Did they not look a lot like the cheeses put on sale on Krupówki Street – which I now realised must *all* have been 'fake'? In this situation the *bacówka*, the fire, the place of purchase all refer to an 'authentic' cheese. The shape of the cheese (as for the taste, I do not think I would be able to taste the difference without proper guidance) and the 'postcard wall' inside the hut related

⁷⁵ <http://matchingtracksuits.com/2008/07/04/rain-and-ice-cream/>. The American tourist then notices 'but that's really just my hyper-clean American safety-sealed conscience speaking. We consume so many germs by the second that it would probably terrify most of us, and put OCD-clean folks into a catatonic state'. Thus, the tourist ends up opting for a place where 'you know you're getting something traditional, something with character and heart' - a 'unique' product – to a safe and hygienic 'modern' cheese.

to the tourism oscypek network. The lack of productivity however made me reflect upon whether the cheeses were in fact produced and then transported up to the hut from a farm further down the hill.

This example illustrates that the different enactments of the cheese not only work to show the cheese as a boundary object, as 'a "trading zone" between two different cultural zones' (Law & Singleton 2005:348). Rather, the cheese works as an ontologically radical object which 'subsists in, and participates in the enactment of, entirely different spatial logics or realities, and those spatial realities have complex relations with one another' (Ibid.). *What the cheese was* in this hut is not just a matter of perspective. Through its relations, the cheese is displayed not as different 'versions' of a boundary object which changes appearance according to the perspective from which it is seen. Rather, it is a fluidly or at times undomesticated object gradually transforming and existing 'in and through the juxtaposition of uncontrollable and generative otherness' (Ibid.:347). As such, the aim of this chapter was not only to answer a question of *what the oscypek is*, but also to show how its different identities were transformed and enacted and how the work affording that change connected to other entities. By focussing on the object relations and workings which made an object possible rather than on the object itself, it is possible to make out a number of effects of the various enactments of the oscypek: questions that popped up (on hygiene, provenience, pricing), arrangements which were set up (control, labelling, festivals), practices which were made possible or inhibited (providing or leaving out sheep milk, outdoor selling).

Cheese, destination and radical ontology

Through the narratives in this chapter, the cheese was deployed as an object connecting and being aligned with entities that would otherwise be conceived as belonging to separate spheres or categories of analysis: the bacówka, Zakopane, the European Union, hygiene, tourism, local food stuff, shepherding, laboratory testing, branding, authenticity, etc. Not only is the cheese transformed in this continuous linking. Also the destination is ordered according to the altering relationships to new entities and to new demands – of mass production, of hygiene, of authenticity. As shown, these modes of ordering are not mutually exclusive, but coexist in different more or less consistent enactments of the destination in which, as noted by Simoni (2007) studying the role of tobacco and cigars on tourism related world building in Cuba, 'the boundaries [...] were constantly overflowed, blurred and re-negotiated' (Ibid.:9). In a similar way, the cheese in the above four network narratives worked in various, often opposing but also overlapping ways. In this work, the cheese was actively engaged in shaping the realities influencing the destination in various ways.

The oscypek narratives show that workings within the destination network constantly construct, assemble and ultimately stabilise (at least temporarily) tourism and destination realities through relations to socio-material actors such as the cheese. The destination is shaped physically by the presence of shepherd's huts around Zakopane and of cheese vending stalls at the market, in town and on Krupówki Street. It is part of the tourist experience, as it is bought and sold at the vending huts, in town or in restaurants, is pictured, is

consuming on site or brought home as a souvenir⁷⁶. It is a vital and important part of the local economy and a means of employment to many farmers producing the 'fake' cheese from cow's milk and from where it is distributed locally and increasingly to other parts of Poland and Europe. It has become a part of the branding of not only Zakopane and the Tatras, but also of Poland.

In observations of practices connected to the production and selling of oscypek in Zakopane, the cheese was enrolled into discourses of authenticity and hygiene, to places (the main street, mountain pastures, the *bacówka*, 'the international market'), to documents (legislative documents, papers and emblems permitting sale and authenticating the place of origin of the cheese), to objects (cheese stalls, lorries to transport carts and cheeses, cheese moulds, smoke - and tea!) and to people (the stand owners, the vendors, the shepherds, Polish and international tourists and locals). In this context, the oscypek was ordered and worked to connect certain localities (Tatra Mountain pastures, Zakopane, Krupówki Street), cheese practices (shepherding, cheese fabrication, vending and acquisition) and tourism (local and regional food, host-guest interaction and product purchase). During this process, the practices, entities, places and people were merged, transformed and in some cases othered. The cheese seemed to simultaneously work as an agent and conveyor of tradition and locality, tourism and mass production, modernity and managerialism, as well as branded uniqueness.

The tracing of such complex and overlapping narratives enact the destination object and its 'contradictive' network constructors in their heterogeneity of multiplicity (Law 2000). The close descriptive and process-oriented methodology exposes contingencies (Michael 1996) and deconstruct taken for granted categories of analysis demonstrating the complexity and entanglement of tourism places, events, phenomena, actors and objects. This provides a new understanding of how destinations are constantly assembled in concrete practices and performances involving human and non-human actors. By exploring a radical ontology, a variety of actors emerge as parts of the enacting of the destination construct, demonstrating that the tourist destination and the objects included in its network are neither 'pure', nor truly controllable in terms of identity, manageability and marketability. As actor-network theory reshape ontology and our understanding of how 'the reality we live with is one performed in a variety of practices' (Mol 1999:74), we are not only confronted with different objects, but also with the option and possibility to *choose between them*. In relation to tourism, the heterogeneous processes of enacting not one, but *several* objects, whether they are cheeses or destinations, challenge a common brand management strategy of 'image mainstreaming', often seeking to create and promote one 'unique' selling point and hereby dismissing and muting 'destination mess'⁷⁷. In this broader perspective, the relational and materially sensitive approach potentially provides us with broader and more complex understandings of the relations and entities which construct and enable the destination, its objects, cultures and identity, not only in research but also in the daily practices of doing, managing and

⁷⁶ In Goralach et al. (2006) the authors identify one way of seeing the oscypek as 'a souvenir for mass tourism'.

⁷⁷ For a critique of the unique destination branding and a discussion on the possibility of multiplicity branding, see Ren & Stilling-Blichfeldt (2008)

promoting the destination. This socio-material relation between cultural and tourism practices is further elaborated in the following chapter.

Chapter 8

The house and the land. Property, tradition and agency



As portrayed in countless books and dissertations on the Górale, a Polish 'Tatra cult' promoted by well-educated and well-connected outside visitors grew from the 1860s and 1870s. During this time, the Tatras and Zakopane emerged as institutions of national importance (Stone 2005) and the people living there, the Górale, rose to become a national romantic symbol of the Polish people (*'idealfolk'*, Ekströmer 1993:19). As a consequence, local dialect and other musical, cultural and material expressions were proclaimed as archetypically Polish. A most distinguished material exponent of this historic trend is the *Zakopane style*⁷⁸. Erected in this style, the wooden Górale house today stands both as a national symbol, a tourism icon and as a prominent example of the local material culture. This iconic status of the Zakopane house is confirmed by the mayor when asked to select the most important assets of the town as tourist destination:

'The main asset of this area in my opinion is the Górale culture, which was shaped here over many years, and is now being more and more exposed to the people. I don't only mean the habits and the behaviour of the people, but also the architectural style. There's so much stress put on the development of wooden architecture in Poland, that you can see Górale style buildings even at the sea side. They're not the real Górale style wooden houses, but they've been adapted and modernised by Witkiewicz, the father of Witkacy, a great architect. He introduced a new style of architecture here, the so-called Witkiewicz style of architecture. You can see many buildings built in this style; you can see them all over Poland. When I mention the local architecture, we mustn't forget that the traditional Górale architecture was developed due to sheep herding, so it looked differently – different rooftop angles, different methods of joining buildings together. We have some very old buildings like that here; they're 100 or 200 years old. Take the house of Sabała [legendary Górale folk musician from the late 1800s] as an example. It was renovated recently and serves as a meeting place. It's not widely open for visitors, but it'll sure become a tourist attraction quite soon'.

The house is here articulated as emblematic as it is used to represent a region, Górale culture, specific local practices, but also the nation in wider terms. At the same time, the mayor also points to the house as a tourist attraction as well as an increasingly popular contemporary building fashion, making it a Tatra export product to a both national and international market⁷⁹. The mayor's statement illustrates the ways in which the material culture and local tradition connect and interact with tourism and other 'modern' phenomenon in a number of intricate ways. The house is narrated as a concatenation of tradition, adaptation and modernity, as it is portrayed as an icon, a symbol, a brand, as an attraction as well as a product. Related to various discourses, socio-material expressions and practices of e.g. tourism planning and development, the house enact and shape the destination in various ways. As such, the house may be seen as an actor at the same time maintaining and transforming a social, economic and spatial hierarchy. It is this performance and

⁷⁸ Or *'Witkiewicz style'* after the architect who designed it as a Pan-Polish building and craft style (Reinfuss 1988)

⁷⁹ The architect Jan K. also confirmed the national interest for the 'Górale style' home. Furthermore, the weekly local newspaper of *Tygodnik Podhalański*, also sold in Chicago to the many Polish-Americans living there, frequently features a number of American advertisements for Górale style homes.

working which will be further investigated in the next chapter. I show that the house - and the land connected to it - actively contribute to constructing the destination - both in their versions as Górale and as entities, such as the hostel, which have stepped out of semiotic character (Michael 1996:57). In this stepping out of character, the entities change roles and identities as a consequence of shifting relations to other entities within the destination network. This is shown by tracing some of the complex and hybrid connections between house and the concepts and practices of tradition, modernity and tourism.

In the following I first seek to approach the Górale house from an ethnographical perspective, showing how it acts to encompass and confirm social identity and how the house is inseparably connected not only physically, but also ideologically, to the land. It is subsequently demonstrated how references to traditions and local cultural practices work as strategic ordering tools affecting and restricting the development of tourism at the destination today. The house and land are of interest in the description of the destination because of their locally attributed significance which turns property acquisition into a cultural and not just economic issue – and vice versa, since tourism development also works to challenge and transform house practices. By analytically intermingling usually disassociated practices of culture and economy into this next narrative, I seek to point to the socio-material connectivity between local culture and modern-day mass tourism, hereby also conveying the multiplicity of the destination construct.

After this contextualisation of the Górale house ideology and the local and traditional relations to land, I proceed by demonstrating how 'new' destination actors also make use of land and houses. I do so by introducing a house 'contestant' in the shape of the *hostel*. Through two hostel narratives, I first show how the hostel is not only different to the Górale house in ideological terms, i.e. it does not enforce or support Góralism (Schneider 2006) or a specific Górale strategy for continued ethnic existence (Pine 2001, Ekströmer 1993). Also, it enables different tourism practices acting as devices to shape the destination network according to an new ideology of communality or a new business strategy. Through my relational and socio-material approach to the house I challenge the traditional understanding of entrepreneurial agency in which it becomes clear that not only human and rigid actors act. So do non-human, more ambiguous, fluid and modest entities.

As a whole, the chapter seeks to address the observation during my fieldwork that land and houses were often articulated by Górale, by outside entrepreneurs and commentators (ethnographers, journalists, legislators) and by non-landowning locals as obligatory or at least crucial *points of passage* (Callon 1986), i.e. entities through which network actors 'must pass in order to articulate both their identity and their *raison d'être*' (Michael 1996:54) or in order to create and maintain a (positive) relation to the destination. The house/hostel concomitant distinctions and complementarities demonstrate how differences are appointed but also negotiated between what is present or made absent, what is said and what is done, what is enacted or what is not. Hence, the land, house and hostel all worked as actors through acquisition, tourist accommodation and service development, through architecture, landscaping and interior decoration in competing, but also overlapping networks cutting and defining the destination network.

House and land. Timelessness and change

'Where do you come from, whom do you belong to, and what belongs to you and yours? These are the key questions of Górale identity, and their answers are encompassed by house identity'.

Pine 2001:446

According to Frances Pine in the article *Naming the House and Naming the Land: Kinship and Social Groups in Highland Poland* (2001), 'Górale identity and personhood is inextricably bound to membership in a named and a kin-based community located in the mountains. In order to supplement their subsistence and maintain their land, villagers have long been engaged in a plethora of non-farming activities, often involving migration from the village, the region, and even the country. In spite of this fact, they *represent* themselves primarily as peasant farmers' (Ibid.: 455f, see also Ekströmer 1993:21)⁸⁰. Pine argues how the house and the land are of vital importance for building social identity and how they, as the places where farming is carried out and farmer identity is rooted, are used as metaphors for kinship. The house and the land function as lineage in the Górale kinship system in a way in which 'it is not the people who are accumulating their land but the house and the land which can be seen as recruiting their people' (Pine 2001:446). As such, it is not the person or family but rather the house which determines your lineage.

In her analysis of the Górale house, Pine highlights the tension between the continuity of the house in terms of kinship, economy and rituals reinforcing house identity and its changing relationships to its surrounding, such as state, church and tourism. She argues that the house must be understood through its contradictory roles, as both a-historical keeper of a local moral economy and as ever-changing adaptor to a dynamic society. Since Pines first began her fieldwork in the village of Pyzówka in 1977, many things have certainly changed in Podhale and, in a larger context Poland starting with the political and economic system, along with European integration, increasing globalisation, not to mention an intensification and privatisation of tourism (Cooley 2005). The traditional wooden one-storey houses described by Pine as the most common in the village at the time of her fieldwork were spatially organised through a traditional division into the *czarna izba* ('black room') used for most daily indoor occupations and the unheated *biała izba* ('white room') reserved for special occasions. However, according to Pine, these traditional houses were already at the time increasingly replaced not only with the next generation of two or multi-storey wooden houses but also more extensively by brick buildings. These new buildings, which already gained prevalence in the late 70s, 'reflect elaborations, rather than changes in, this practical and symbolic ordering of space' (Pine 2001:447). In her article, Pine emphasises the capacity of the house to encompass and bear both continuity and change. This explains its central role as core of social and economic identity: 'the legitimacy of the house stems partly from its capacity to endure, despite enormous changes and upheavals in the wider political economy' (Ibid.:445). Pine also points to tourism as a transformative agent in the physical changes of the house. As a consequence of the gradual developing of tourism in Podhale since socialism, some houses

⁸⁰ Something which might also connect to the articulation by many informants of Zakopane as a 'village' as was displayed and discussed in chapter 5.

built in the 90s 'resembled alpine hotels, with a kitchen on every floor and numerous rooms to let out to skiers and hikers.'(Ibid.:455).

Apart from its capacity to encompass continuity and change, the house is also characterised by its ability to negotiate the conflicting ideologies of equality and hierarchy. According to Pine, these co-exist in many areas of Górale social life but are facilitated partly 'by the mediation of the house, which provides villagers with both a strong personal identity and a clear position within village social organization' (Ibid.:448). Even if status today also springs from education, bureaucratic positions, and after the fall of socialism, from business, the ownership of land still maintains an important role as major source of social identity and status. Although it might rightly be argued that social control does not hold near as much importance in a mass tourism destination with 30.000 inhabitants as in a rural and secluded mountain village, I still claim, following and stretching Pines arguments, that issues of social identity and hierarchy still find (some of) their base in the house and in land ownership. Mindful of the fact that Pines fieldwork was carried out in a Górale village in the 1970s, I wish to argue that the Górale house (or rather what is perceived and appointed as being a Górale house, as this clearly changes over time) and the land still plays an important role today in Zakopane, not only in providing a means of income and by asserting and establishing local identity, but also as an ordering agent implicated in the ways in which the destination may be developed and constructed. However, as will be further unfolded during this chapter, new ways of 'doing house', that is new ways of imagining, building, owning (or renting), and in various other ways relating to and making use of it, also change and uphold the meaning, status and effect of the house as a *multiple object* (Mol 2002).

Owning land

The Górale sees himself as coming from the land, the mountain, and almost considers it a sin to sell the land of the fathers, which must be forwarded to coming generations of Górale.'
(Ekströmer 1993:21, my translation)

Early in my fieldwork it became obvious that land played a central role in how Zakopane and its surroundings were envisioned, explained and made possible. In guide and historical books, in interviews and walking around, land was not only represented as 'the land of the Górale', but also as 'privately owned', 'fragmented into numerous scattered patches of land', 'confiscated by the state', 'developed without permission' or 'in need of protection'. As a consequence of this, a broad range of relations to land seemed to be part also in determining the physical tourism development in Zakopane – in the past, today and in the future. For instance, Douglas and Box (2000) note how Zakopane's adjacency to the Tatra National Park has often been the source of a number of conflicts between the park promoting nature conservation, the local authorities focusing on land development, and individual wishes among the members of the local community.

As a consequence of an endogamous marriage system and inheritance customs in which land is divided between heirs (as opposed to being made over to one heir), the land is constantly divided into increasingly shrinking plots, resulting in a situation in which, according to Ekströmer (1993)

'a farmer who owns a couple of hectares of land may have this land divided into up to 4-500 parts, spread all over the town area. He can hardly use the land effectively; he may not even know where his different patches are' (Ibid.:21, my translation).

This is also retrieved, although in more quantifiable terms, with Gorlach et al. (2006) who state that

'Małopolska region [the region where Zakopane is situated] has a very cumbersome agrarian structure. Over 97% of agricultural land is privately owned [...]. The main problem is the farm size – on average, they are only 2.6 hectares (6.6 ha in Poland), of which only 2.1 ha is agriculturally used. Over 90% of farms are smaller than 5 hectares and farms of the relatively optimal size of 15-20 ha comprise only 0.2%. One negative factor is the large number of plots that are spread over the large area. This arrangement is rather stagnant since only 1-2 farms per hundred are changing in size each year. In many areas plots are even further divided into smaller parts' (Ibid.:39).

In Zakopane, this 'cumbersome agrarian structure' often results in conflict related to tourism development. As pressure increasingly rises from an ever demanding clientele to develop ski facilities - a rather space demanding undertaking - many of the land conflicts concern the expansion and possible location of future ski lifts and cable cars⁸¹. One such conflict developed around a central Zakopane ski slope on the hill of Gubałówka. Inclined towards and visible from the city centre, this hill side is divided between several landowners. In the winter of 2007, a dispute arose between 30 of these Gubałówka landowners and the Polish Cable Railways (PKL), the owner of the 70-year old funicular leading to the top of Gubałówka, ultimately leading to in the closure of the ski hill. Since the Górale and Zakopane enjoy a special status in Poland, as previously mentioned, this story of the state vs. the independent, stubborn and perhaps also avaricious Górale⁸² soon became the subject of intense national media attention. For ski tourists and tourism planners and marketers, this resulted in discouraging information in travel guides and on destination websites: 'Gubałówka main slope is a very good one - both for skiers and snowboarders. Unfortunately it is formally closed'⁸³, or 'The main slope is very nice but unfortunately it is closed for skiers due to the owner's decision'⁸⁴.

The complicated partition of the land surrounding Zakopane means that larger development projects are often to be carried out in cooperation between many landowners, which has happened with some success at the 'cooperative' Harena ski center. Alternatively, land is to be procured from a large number of owners by

⁸¹ See Stone 2005 for a review of the environmental debate concerning the cable car on Kasprowy Wierch

⁸² According to Maciek this was how the issue was most commonly represented in the Polish press.

⁸³ <http://www.discoverzakopane.com/narty/stoki/zakopane-gubalowka.html>

⁸⁴ <http://www.discoverzakopane.com/narty/stoki/gubalowka.html>

one entrepreneur in order to be developed, as was the case at the ski centre of Szymoszkowa⁸⁵. In relation to the development of ski tourism, similar disputes over land have also happened in Butorowy Wierch, among others. According to *Warsaw Voice*, the conflicts are being reinforced by the continued absence of comprehensive legal rules regulating the status of many ski slopes, a lack of clear regulation which is said to have hampered many of PKL's plans for new projects in the Polish mountains⁸⁶.

In order to solve the Gubałówka dispute, PKL's establishment assured the landowners that making private land available for the ski slope would not entail that they no longer owned the land. As stated by Jerzy Laszczyk, president of PKL:

'They would contribute their leasehold rights to the new company, while PKL would provide its own land and fixed assets to allow activities such as snow grooming and snowmaking'⁸⁷.

This assurance directs the attention to the possibility that not only legislation and economic disagreements stand between the PKL and the land owners. As pointed out by Schneider (2006), the conception of family land 'is part of their sense of belonging to this region, of being Górale' (Ibid.:123). Based on this and previous statements on the relation between Górale and the land, it becomes clear that issues beyond legislation and economic gain connecting to the buying up and development of land in Zakopane. In seeking to understand the development of ski tourism, other factors than economic thinking and profitability must be taken into account. In this case, tourism development shows itself as related to matters of ownership and grounded in the particular cultural and ideological importance attributed to land by the Górale.

Understanding tradition and ideology as actors taking part in the continuous construction of the destination and its tourism development might help to explain why a large part of the Zakopane tourism business still today remains locally and family owned - although some international companies are gradually entering the market. But the cultural explanation must not end the inquiry here. As argues previously in chapter 4 and 5, culture in actor-network theory is perceived as an outcome, not a cause. It is a non-stable entity which is continuously produced and enacted. Culture, when appointed and maintained as a *reason* for how the destination should look like and may be used, manifests itself as an *actor* in the destination construct. Presented with 'cultural explanations' to the questions that we pose, as was the case when looking into the local relations and ideologies of the house and the land, we must ask *how* culture is manifested in the destination network. Also, we must continue to explore *for whom* culture is a beneficial strategy and tool to employ in constructing and ordering the destination. These two questions were partly answered in the above, where it was shown how a Górale ideology, first articulated by outside bourgeoisie and passed on and reinforced by Górale themselves⁸⁸, has impacted tourism through a normative aesthetics and through a powerful and regulative association to land. A third undertaking however is to probe beyond this 'culturalisation' of the house and the land. In seeking to describe the *multiplicity* which, as will be shown,

⁸⁵ In this case, the investor was forced to buy out about a hundred landowners after the cooperative idea was abandoned because of the inability to reach an agreement. Private communication, Maciek.

⁸⁶ <http://www.warsawvoice.pl/view/12542/>

works to construct the heterogeneous destination through contradictory, yet partially connected strategies of ordering, representations and discourses. In order to do so, a new destination network actor is introduced in the shape of the hostel.

The Hostel. New house and destination actors

In many Górale houses of Zakopane, and its newer permutations often built in what may be termed a *neo-Górale* style (Reinfuss 1988), a few of the rooms, typically located on the upper one or two floors, are used as 'wolne pokój' (free rooms) for tourists. Judging from the many signs crowding the townscape, such rental practice is very widespread in Zakopane (and is of course not restricted to wooden Górale houses) and this bed and breakfast type service provides accommodation for a large number of tourists⁸⁹. Along with private accommodation, tourists may also choose the ordinarily more costly hotel solution. Such accommodation has also been available since the early beginnings of tourism. Some hotels remain from the late 19th century, such as the bourgeois Hotel Sabała and Hotel Stamary. Today these lie alongside massive concrete hotel structures from the socialist era of mass tourism, some of which have been overtaken by well-know multi-national hotel chains. Among the newer innovations on the hotel stage are luxurious neo-Górale style hotels.



Wolny pokój: rooms for rent in a private house in Zakopane

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ And also reinforced by ethnographers and tourists, as argued by Cooley (2005)

⁸⁹ Although because of much of it functioning under a black market economy, a large part of it is unregistered. Private communication, Zofia.



An example of socialist mass accommodation



A newly built and future luxury hotel erected in neo-Górale style

However, simultaneously to my stay in Zakopane, the hostel form of accommodation reached the town. During a period of under a year, three hostels opened and a fourth was advertised as 'opening soon'. In the following, I point and address to the hostel as a new actor at the destination. I do so by using the cases of two of these hostels to illustrate how this new version of house challenged the ideology, shape and use of the Górale house described in the above. In the first narrative of the *Goodbye Lenin Hostel*, I demonstrate how the hostel not only defies the Górale house as a socio-material destination actor, but also show how it alters the ordering of the destination by attracting new types of tourists and enabling new ways of doing and being, hereby representing and performing a new destination version. In the second narrative of *Nathan's villa*, I not only show a contesting hostel narrative, but also critically address the understanding of the tourist entrepreneur as a 'hard actor' (de Laet & Mol 2000), that is an actor which acts in a rational and singlehanded manner.

Goodbye Lenin. 'We love people'

Many of the biggest, most famous or popular hotels and restaurants, but also more modest tourism structures carry names which refer to local history, scenery and culture such as the hotels of Sabała (after a famous folk musician) and Giewont (a mountain peak overlooking Zakopane) or the restaurants of Karczma Bacówka (The Shepherds Hut's Inn). These names offer a distinct contrast to the 'Goodbye Lenin' hostel inaugurated in the winter of 2007. This hostel was the second in line to be opened by two young entrepreneurs from Śląsk (Silesia). Their second Zakopane hostel differed from the first, located in a warehouse type building in an industrial area of Cracow. According to the owners, the first hostel with its kitsch *Ostalgie*⁹⁰ décor brings reference to former communist times in a humorous fashion. In Zakopane however, a totally different approach and decoration was used, more in thread with the original idea of coining the hostel chain along the idea of Pangaea⁹¹. As the owners explain during our interview, the original concept was

'very, very different. We were planning to open the company as Pangaea hostel. This land before the continents were separated, this one land.'

They further explain how the 'Goodbye Lenin' concept was only kept in Zakopane for the sake of marketing.

⁹²In their wooden hostel cottage, they wanted to create a 'nature' hostel:

'Actually except the name, there is no reference to socialism. We don't want to create an industrial atmosphere. It is Goodbye Lenin *Nature*, that's the idea'.

⁹⁰ 'The notion of Ostalgie is coined by a contraction of the German Ost (East) and 'Nostalgie' (nostalgia) and refers to the sentiments felt by some of the 'good old days' under socialism. This sentiment is portrayed in the movie by Wolfgang Becker *Goodbye Lenin* (2003) which also inspired the name for the Polish hostels.

⁹¹ Pangaea is the name of the supercontinent which preceded the current continents before their separation.

⁹² They did however state the fact that Lenin stayed in exile for a few years in nearby Poronin before the Russian revolution!

Although on their website the Zakopane hostel, termed as the 'Goodbye Lenin Nature', is staged as a 'reminiscent of "dacza's" the gladly departed communist leaders once escaped to' it also explains how the owners have sought to 'create our own mountain getaway and we want to share it with everyone!'⁹³. As explained by one of the owners, who have both previously travelled in South America:

'I think we wanted to make a small Patagonia in our hostel in Zakopane. We are looking for this kind of place. We don't have Patagonia, so we have to create it'.

The two hostel owners were anxious to emphasize that their dream of Zakopane differed from what they term as the common Polish dream:

'We are not dreaming about the same Zakopane [...] Unfortunately Polish people [...] mainly think this about Zakopane: "I would like to have a house there and a few rooms to rent, and live there in the city centre. And Zakopane is Krupówki Street". Which we believe it's not. They are more interested in just going to Krupówki and have fun. And Zakopane for them is not nature, it's more fun. It's McDonald's!'

By having based their service in 'the deep forest' directly opposite the national park, the hostel owners express a wish to show tourists that there are a lot of other things to see other than Krupówki Street. During the interview, the two compare the Polish dream of Zakopane to that of Western tourists:

'We discussed it with Western European people and asked them: "What is going to the mountains for you"? And they said "Going to the mountains!". It seems like for Polish people going to the mountains means Zakopane and Krupówki. [For them it means] cars, and food and shopping'.

As an opposition to what the owners see as a Polish understanding of Zakopane, they envision the following:

'we would love to have a mountain hut full of foreign people. [...] If I was going to Zakopane with a girlfriend, then I would go [for a private room]. It is more comfortable with bathroom and TV. But if I go with 3 or 4 friends I go to the hostel, because there is fun. And all this vibe of the hostel gives you new relations'.

This approach to the hostel as a way of creating and passing on their private vision of Zakopane contrasts and challenges the house practices of the 'wolny pokój' type accommodation as a local, home-based and

⁹³ <http://www.goodbyelenin.pl/zakopane/mainEN.html>

family-run business. According to Ekströmer (1993), the providing of tourism accommodation by local family businesses must be seen as a means to other ends, a strategy enabling to maintain and improve a certain way of living or standard of living⁹⁴. For the hostel owners however, the hostel is a project carrying meaning in itself. Having to give up a large sailing project, the two now see the hostels as a way to bring people close:

'We love people. To meet them, to hear their stories, what they do. Normally you can [only] do it when you travel. [We said] OK let's stay here and let's try the hostel. Try to get the same [as travelling] with the people coming here, just opposite, but the result is sort of the same. And in the same time create... let's call it network. It may sound as boasting with only two [hostels]. Maybe there will be more of them, we will see. And then build this boat, realise a dream and not just sit on our asses, not just dream. But really doing it.'

The two owners elaborate on what it means to be 'really doing it':

'We don't have this attitude that we have to earn money. Of course we don't want to lose money there, that's stupid, but Zakopane should be economically working for itself. We want to organize tours, grill a sheep; we want live music for all the people staying'.

By proposing 'fun' things, the owners hope to attract people with whom to connect, presenting their personal version of Zakopane and sharing passions and tastes. During the interview, which took place at the hostel in Cracow, this idea (although in a Cracow version) became clear as staff, friends and befriended guests intervened with questions, greetings and drink offers during the interview in the hostel bar. In Zakopane, the communal visions of the owners are accommodated within and through the hostel as I experience during a four day stay as a guest. Community is performed through a compact and intimate (some might say crowded) lay-out of the sleeping rooms and the shared areas for cooking, watching DVDs and 'hanging out' and through the offers provided at the hostel, such as personal servicing on a first-name basis and the invitation to participate in aforementioned activities such as excursions, live music or a barbecue. Both the hostel design and concept contribute to the enacting of communality, as strangers share rooms, bathrooms, and other collective areas and facilities in and around the house, as they prepare and eat dinner, or watch TV in the main room, and share hiking routes and experiences in the guest book or on the hostel web page.

In this hotel enactment, the idea of Pangaea is connected to European tourists along with a number of local entities, such as the rented wooden hut from 1909 where the hostel is located, the bonfire tradition, and the National park nearby promoted on the website. This website features a heterogeneous and pastiche display of local paraphernalia and global references: people in folk costumes, sheep, the mountains, but also a picture of Lenin wearing a black Górale hat rimmed with seashells and a ciupaga (Górale axe), two easily

⁹⁴ In the case of Górale, Ekströmer (1991, 1993) sees this as an ethnic strategy, in which seeking to improve conditions through tourism and migrant labour becomes part of an overall attempt to ensure the survival of the group. See chapter 9 for a more thorough presentation of Górale strategies.

recognisable components of the male Górale costume. What appears in this Goodbye Lenin version of the destination is a place set in nature, a place of connecting, sharing and bringing people together. It is constructed as a place in which the 'Polish dream' of Zakopane, of Krupówki and of a private bathroom with TV is replaced by a kitsch version of a communist past joined with nature and the communality of Pangaea. As will be shown in the next, however, this socio-material hostel enactment is not the only way of challenging the Górale house.

Nathan's Villa. 'True stylish hostel'

During my fieldwork, Nathan was the only Western foreigner I came across, who to my knowledge had attempted - or rather succeeded – in purchasing land in order to run a business in Zakopane. This next narrative is based on my interview with Nathan. After some successful years in business, Nathan, an American entrepreneur in his 30s, left his home country to travel the world. He eventually arrived to Romania, where he opened a hostel in Sighisoara in 2001. After some time, Nathan travelled on to Poland, where he met his present wife and settled down. Today, his hostels are found in three major Polish cities: Wrocław (opened 2003 and advertised as the first hostel in Poland), Warsaw, and Cracow. As one of the first hostel entrepreneur in Poland, Nathan sees himself as an experienced business man. He has worked on a national level with policy making in this area of tourism accommodation. Now he envisions Zakopane as the next big thing for tourism development directed towards Western tourists:

'I think that Zakopane is such an underrated winter destination on the European market, it phenomenal! I don't know how... I know how the places in Switzerland can charge so much, because of decades old name branding. But I don't know why someone have to spend 80 or 100 Euros just to go skiing for a single day, when they can go to Zakopane and still have the same if not better snow, great mountains and spend the fractions of the cost. And that's the whole thing.'

According to Nathans, his hostel competitors are surprisingly passive, too small or misallocated and they all lack an understanding of potential clients and marketing:

'Not a single person is marketing towards the English crowd, nobody. Which I don't understand [...] And not a single company has a contract with [a competitor], because it is too small, it doesn't happen and it's in the wrong spots. They put it away from Krupówki. You got to be on Krupówki to market towards the foreigner. Because the foreigner will take a bus in the morning to go skiing, a bus in morning to go hiking, swimming what ever. But no one wants to take a bus home at 2 o'clock in the morning when they are hammered. And let me tell you that every English person in the evening wants to have fun. So you have to have that locality, you need to be near the market area. And in Zakopane that's Krupówki'.

Nathan's business plan seeks to cater to the right people with the right offer and by being in the right place. In order to do just that, he has succeeded in purchasing a centrally located plot of land in Zakopane. The original smaller construction has been demolished in order to build a completely new hostel. With great enthusiasm, Nathan talks about his ideas behind a 'top notch' 880 m², 110 beds hostel running on geothermal heating, which he has designed himself:

'One: I wanted to build it right. And I purchased the land and the building. And two: I wanted to build it to the Zakopane style, but I wanted to model it into a true stylish hostel, very hip communal common areas, shared accommodation but also I'm going to have the private rooms'.

In this version of the hostel, both local discourses and practices on house and land and the prior hostel version are challenged. Unlike the Goodbye Lenin, Nathan's hostel is connected through ownership to the land on which it is erected. But it is not owned by a Górale. Nathan's narrative of the hostel does not relate to local identity, to family or other social ties, but are rather directed towards the creation of a prosperous business. Unlike Goodbye Lenin, it is not nature or communality practices which are emphasised, but rather the innovative aspects of the business plan and the hostel itself. Through the building of his top-range hostel, his hope is to benefit from the absence of competitors and the failure of other tourism businesses in Zakopane to attract the right international clientele. The design of the hostel was done according to his taste and standards mixing a local expression of the Zakopane style with what he terms a 'true stylish hostel'. Nathan sees his role as an innovative and successful entrepreneur having participated (or even started) the Polish hostel business and the policies around it. He displays his experience with the Polish hostel business and elaborates on his thoughts and considerations concerning the development potentials.



A billboard at the Cracow bus station advertising for the three, soon to be four, Nathan's Villa hostels in early 2007

Defeat of a managerial hero. Or, who acts?

At the time of interview in the summer of 2007, Nathans plans of building a hostel in Zakopane were not going as scheduled. The forthcoming opening of this his fifth hostel had long been announced on billboards at the Cracow and Zakopane bus stations, but already at the time of our interview the opening date also displayed on the website had been postponed several times. After purchasing his land, Nathan was now waiting, and had been for a while, for the last procedures and signatures for the building permit to be processed:

'I've waited a year already for a building permit. And I still haven't got it, because I need a signature from every surrounding property on to my land. And half my property is a river, and you can't get a signature from a river!'

After talking of the hassle of going to court, waiting months to get a court date and the final signature, his hardship with the safety and fire department, the sanitation and health department and city council, Nathan continues:

'Because of a formality I have had to wait this long. Which really just suck, because if you are a small investor and you want to do something quickly, it's truly impossible. They only cater

towards people that have the ability and have the money. Have the ability to sit on it for a year like I did'.

In this time of writing in early 2009, the status of the building and opening of the hostel is still uncertain and I have not succeeded in receiving information about the current situation. Therefore, no full explanation may be given to why the hostel project did not go on as planned from the time when the idea was conceived in 2006 and still to this day remains unfinished. The question is how this unsuccessful course of events may be analysed. Is it an example of the entrepreneur caught up in rigid bureaucratic structures? Were the intentions of the actor simply miscalculated or ill-planned? Or was Nathan simply not strong enough to enforce and enact his vision of the house within the desired timeframe? These questions all require an understanding of Nathan as invested with a specific ability and capacity to intentionally act.

The story of Nathan's villa could be narrated as a story of Nathan as a heroic mover and shaker, a one man army intentionally confronting the establishment and common practices of the destination⁹⁵. De Laet and Mol (2000) depict this entrepreneurial actor as 'Rational Man – a well-bounded, sane and centred *human* figure' (Ibid.:226). It is in that way, Nathan chooses to tell his hostel story; as a tale in which he buys, draws, builds, struggles; in short, one in which *he* acts. In Nathan's account, all actions were narrated as flowing from him or as connected to him via intermediaries, such as a competitor, foreign tourists or a public body. However, this anthropocentric and rational understanding of the agent is rejected by ANT. According to Law (1991), 'an agent may be pictured as a set of relations of (a) characterising, (b) storing and (at least in some instances) offering a degree of discretion with respect to 'power to' and 'power over'[...] In this way of thinking, agents are both sets of relations, and nodes in sets of relations' (Ibid.:172). Hence, agency is not something which may be possessed or kept, but something which is exercised in relations. Similarly, interests are not conceived as animating actors, but also emerge as outcomes of connections: '[interest] are what are locally "induced" by certain actors in other actors with the aid of intermediaries. They may be used to explain a given event, or the network under scrutiny, but they do so contingently, for they themselves can be unravelled to reveal a whole set of enabling conditions (other actors, intermediaries and so on)' (Michael 1996:56). In an ANT narrative of the destination, our undivided attention must therefore not be accorded to explicit interests of human actors.

Still, as noted by Michael (1996), many investigations regarding project trajectories within STS depart from and focus their narratives around human, calculative and control-driven agents. One example is Callon's modern classic *Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay* (1986), describing the attempts made of three biologists to convince fishermen of the viability of scallop farming. This article reflects ANT's practical and analytical emphasis on what Michael (1996) terms 'heroes and managers' (Ibid.:63). In this and other cases (such as Latour 1988) 'particular

⁹⁵ The following remarks are of an analytical nature. They do not in any way refer to Nathan's personal traits. In their presentation of the fluid actor, it is important to specify that I do not refer to Nathan as a person, but as an ideal type of the entrepreneurial actor (see also de Laet & Mol (2000) and Law 1994 for similar discussions)

actors are followed, their “goals”, methods and translations are enumerated’ (Michael 1996:63). Although the detailed examination of ‘powerful’ actors in ANT is most often led by a will to debunk them, their descriptions however presents the investigated networks as clean and clear, displaying and reducing multiplicitous actors as a homogeneous, although provisional unit. According to Michael, such a neat ordering and narrating of the particularities and identities of target entities risk ‘to occlude the indeterminacy and the ambivalence of entities and the associations into which they are tied’ (Ibid.:63). Also, as was discussed in chapter 2, the one-eyed focus on hard actors also risks creating unambiguous and coherent network descriptions in which alternative and invisible enactments or resistance disappear from the narrative⁹⁶.

Nathan could be narrated as such a neat and singular actor through a heroic tale of the entrepreneur. He could be represented as a highly calculative agent, a ‘hard, sturdy hero’ (de Laet & Mol 2000), merging multiple actors into a unitary whole through the powerful and interested manipulation of his surroundings. However, in order to generate an understanding of the complex multiplicity of the destination network, I suggest bringing attention to the networked and fluid capacities of actors (de Laet & Mol, see chapter 9 for a more thorough exposition of their argument). This highlights that the network is in no way controlled in or through one single actor. The destination narrative must accentuate the contingency and instability of roles and identities created and appointed within the heterogeneous destination network. By challenging the narrative of the hero manager, metaphors of defeat and victory are replaced with allegories of what Michael entitles *permanent reform* (Michael 1996), in which ‘the world we wish to examine is one of inherent instability and incessant skirmishes. Thus, the multiplicity of given actors is reflected in the shifts and changes in the association among them; that is to say, they are endowed with an intrinsic uncertainty’ (Ibid.:64). The present narratives of the house transform the understanding of agency, making it possible to highlight and account for multiple actors, memberships and marginalities within the heterogeneous network. Hence, as we shall see in the following, it becomes clear that entities act as they simultaneously challenge and support the destination network.

Challenging the house

In order to seek new ways to understand and describe the multiplicity of actors and network, entities must be seen, according to de Laet and Mol (2000) as ‘a result of collective action and of evolution over time’. This is attempted in the present chapter by engaging into what Law (1994) terms *relational materialism*, showing how entities such as the house carries out a material impact and exercises durability, while still proving to be continuously transformative, itself a contingent and multidimensional network within the destination network. In order to grasp the multiplicity of what at first glance exhibits order and unity, the Górale house and the hostel were lined up against each other to trace the effects and enactments which they afforded. What becomes visible in this analysis of the house is its capability and capacity as artefact and network to integrate and partially adjoin a number of heterogeneous enactments and modes of ordering. The socio-

⁹⁶ An example of creative resistance to prohibition is mentioned in Law and Singleton (2005) in which alcoholic liver disease patients inject alcohol into fruit (Ibid.:349). This is not mentioned in order to support or glorify such practices, but to point to how following the hard actor often risk to overlook other practices or counter-practices.

cultural and ideological Górale house as well as the Pangaea or 'true stylish' hostels do indeed enable and enact a destination. It is a multiple destination which serves different ideologies and purposes.

In the above, different visions and enactments of the destination were presented in and through the house. The first positioned it as a tool to support and strengthen a number of Górale cultural practice connected to the house and the land. As it was shown, both are ascribed with heavy ideological meaning and great importance for the socio-cultural and economic continuation of the Górale. In this context, the house is used as a way to mark and signal identity, but also to supplement or create an income by offering accommodation to tourists. As mentioned by Pine (2001), the Górale house was used as a safeguard during socialism in which 'the Górale themselves continued to represent the house as the focus of economic and social identity and the site of resistance to the state' (Ibid.:455). The question is whether the house and land may be considered as a bulwark against international tourism development, which threatens a 'traditional' economy, culture and way of life. As was shown, land was indeed influencing the tourist destination through practices of 'problematic' customary land division. This limited access to, obstructed or even prohibited certain forms of tourism development, such as the building of ski lifts and slopes.

The hostel was proposed as a new way of 'doing house' at the destination by affording other performances, workings and effects. Within the destination network, the hostel connects to a number of new actors and entities. In both examples, hostel entrepreneurs were outsiders introducing an - in local respect – alternative type of accommodation type involving a number of new practices, such as communality and international marketing, which were reinforced e.g. through the building, lay-out and interior decoration, business plans, billboards and internet sites. Nathan's Villa sought to attract Western tourists through an offer of 'some outstanding time and great parties'. This was done in an entirely different manner than Goodbye Lenin, by locating foreign tourism in Zakopane on Krupówki Street making it suitable for an active night life, highlighting the affordability for Western tourists and by marketing recognisable offers such as stag parties or skiing and partying for 'friends that want to get away for the weekend'. Both hostels made use of a mix of local and global references in advertisement and building style. The result could be seen as a locally dressed Lenin or a Zakopane style building which must also simultaneously reflect a 'true stylish hostel'. The ownership and social relations to the house were different from that of the Górale house owned and passed on through birthright and built on inherited or family land. Instead, the two hostels were respectively rented or built on land appropriated through purchase. Unlike most (if not all) other local tourism businesses, the hostels mainly sought to cater towards foreign tourists⁹⁷.

Although the hostels were based on contrasting business models, one driven by an ideology of togetherness and Pangaea, the other on harnessing a business idea, they both differed from a strategy in which the sustaining of a local way of life was the end goal, as was the case for the house as a part of an overall Górale strategy portrayed by Pine and Ekströmer in the above. Both at the Goodbye Lenin and in Nathan's

⁹⁷ An exception is the travel agency managed by Barbara mentioned in chapter 5.

narrative, ways of doing business, of renting or constructing the house, of seeing, articulating and performing the destination stands out from and hereby challenges a 'traditional' house enactment.

As I argue in the next, the Górale house and the hostel may both, in spite of these differences in strategy or ideology, be used to show how the network is cut (Strathern 1996), creating boundaries in a destination network which may at times seem incessantly liquid and pliable. As I show in the next, networks have boundaries and heterogeneity does have its limitations. As I try to show, the limit is still in many ways drawn through the house and the land.

'Unbuyable' land and ambiguous artefacts

In the above, Pine and Ekströmer pass on the arduous understanding of the Górale land which will not be sold and cannot be bought (as did I through my inquiries on the matter). So how does it happen that an entrepreneur like Nathan may acquire what he called 'a beautiful chunk' of the Zakopane city centre? How may we understand this selling, which Jan K. describes in the following dramatic way:

'We are selling our homeland piece by piece [to] a growing group of businessmen, who buy land and build apartments to sell away to strangers. The prices of land and flats are so high here, that you can easily become rich by doing so. And they do it. Some of them are people of Górale origins'

One senses the judgment passed on these people selling the land, some of them 'people of Górale origin'. However, Jan K. acknowledges that land *is* indeed sold. This ambiguity between the saying and doing concerning land practices is retrieved with Jurek. In talking about tourism development in Zakopane, he simultaneously emphasizes the intricacy of acquiring land. While saying that 'it is difficult to talk to [older Górale], they don't like to sell the land' he also suggests that

'more people from the middle of Poland buy [to] rent out' adding how 'everything is for rent. They build up some pension with good accommodation. They come here 100% for business, to make money.'

Maciek, also a mountain guide as well as a trained ethnologist, journalist and author of many tourist books on Zakopane, explains great interest in land acquisition by referring to a general increase in wealth in Poland:

'When people are better off, they can buy an apartment. And those people very often choose Zakopane.' This creates 'big areas with big apartment blocks, pretty nice, which are completely empty during the week. During the weekend they come from Cracow or Silesia or some other places to stay. This of course creates some problems, structural and other. And of course it creates a rise in property which is almost enormous.'

Maciek does not negate the fact that land is more difficult to purchase in Zakopane: 'People are very sort of closely connected to the land, their fathers land'. However, as he continues when explaining about the ski lifts,

'as the experience show, it is the problem of the price [...], at some price all the resentment evaporates miraculously!'

In his explanation of the transformation process, Maciek points to its universal character:

'All this causes big increases in property values, flats, houses, land. And of course if you are travelling around Poland you really notice that everything is more expensive here: food, service, etc. Because prices go up to the standards of the tourists and we locals have to pay them as well. As far as I know it's the same everywhere in tourist places around the world'.

The above cases and statements show that not all Górale land is in fact unsellable⁹⁸, but is becoming available for sale at 'the right price', a price which is incessantly rising. Cultural ideologies, such as Góralism, do not necessarily *work* as they are being *articulated*. The *strategy* is not necessarily the same as the *ideology*. This shows that culture as a socio-materially performed and enacted entity is not a fix substance. Within the destination network identities, spaces and artefacts are created and reproduced in processes which not only repeat, but also transform them. While the house and the land are still appointed as closely related to the Górale they are also, simultaneously, identified and working as actors in ongoing transformations of the destination. Whereas the 'traditional' relation to land is specified as locally rooted, the new transformations are explained as part of a universal trait of development. This shows that neither a clear-cut global, homogenising development *nor* a locally specific, culturally rooted ideology create the destination network on its own.

How may land be both 'not for sale' and 'buyable'? Or rather, where is the limit drawn between selling or not, between being able to buy and not? This limit shows to be fleeing, fluid and ever-changing. As we saw in the case with Nathan's villa, entering the destination network as outside land owner was not impossible, but not problem-free either. Just as Nathan was challenging 'what Zakopane is', redefining it as a business means towards the development of Western tourism, so was the workings of the destination network 'getting in the way' of Nathan's strategies and plans through what he saw as troublesome, complicated and detailed regulation. Through the buying up of land and the subsequent plans of building the hostel, the network seemed to show a limit of relations, a limit of translations, developing an inertia (or tenacity, depending of the perspective) in which this particular vision of the hostel - and the destination – could not fully be enacted.

⁹⁸ Or perhaps it also hints to not all land being Górale? For instance, as Nathan mentioned in the interview, an adjacent piece of land to his was formerly owned by Jews. As also noted by Maciek, focus on Górale heritage has the effect overshadowing other heritages in Zakopane.

This shows how the destination networks may order and keep out strategies, practices and enactments which are not (at least partially) translatable into its network.

Another example of the consequences of the regulatory power arising from the contradictory and ambiguous construction of the house and land, both connected to cultural explanations and economy is Kasia, who had a summer job at the Goodbye Lenin. Kasia talks about whether she will return to her birthplace of Zakopane after her studies in Cracow:

‘Of course it’s a nice place, I love it. But when you think about it more, there is nothing to do here; there is no perspective for you. Of course if you have got a big house it is perfect for you. You can rent rooms and you don’t need anything else. But if not, it is difficult to find something here. [...] For owners, I mean, you have the house. And really you don’t need anything else, because there are always tourists here.’

In her contemplation, Kasia links a lack of economic prospect - a ‘perspective’ – and a lack of belonging, not finding ‘something here’, to the owning of a house. As noted by Pine in the above, the key questions of Górale identity on origin and belonging are encompassed by the house. In Kasias case, we see how culture and economy have been connected into an undistinguishable whole symbolised by the house. Through Kasias narrative we see displayed a discrepancy between feeling and being associated to a place, a discrepancy or a breach between her and her birthplace. In this process, the house (and land) work as an inhibitor in the relation between her and Zakopane, creating an inability to enact and being part of the destination – and of her place of birth and upbringing.

House and land: complex networks of tradition and development

This chapter sought to show how the house and land may be understood as destination network actors and adaptive entities in terms of meaning, materiality and performativity. First, the ‘Górale’ house was described by Pine as a guardian of tradition, but also as an entity capable of accommodating change and hierarchy. As metaphors and even as concrete artefacts, the house and land were displayed as solid markers of identity, tracing the limits between belonging, or not. The ‘Górale’ house was presented as an entity and network which successfully manage to contain and accommodate inequality and hierarchy, continuity and change as well as a number of economic, political and cultural changes affected in part by tourism. This resulted in a contradiction in which land was constructed as both ‘unbuyable’ and ‘for sale’ (as well as desirable, expensive and a good investment). As such the house and land hold fluctuating and ambiguous, yet strong and powerful positions in the destination network.

Next, focus was on how the ‘Górale’ house was apparently challenged at the destination in terms of materiality and practice by the hostel and how this affected the way the house - and destination - were created. Not only the house itself, but also its placement, use and decor were shown to contribute to specific enactments of the destination. In their various relations, the house and land proved to be significant for

actors in terms of identity, economy and agency. The important economic and ideological relations were expressed by many informants and were then connected in more intricate ways. I showed how the Górale land was articulated as 'unbuyable', and pointed to other practices in which land could be bought. Culture and economy (and hence tourism development) were not, as first believed, contradictory in the house relations, but rather supplementary. The house and the hostel never became true oppositions, but rather became partially connected. They transformed and manifested themselves as ambiguous, yet (or rather *therefore*) powerful tools to enact the destination, whether as a tool for Górale way of life, as an international Pangaea or an unexploited resource.

In his study of ongoing processes of translation, Callon (1986) notes how certain actors contain the capacity and strategies to get other actors - human beings, institutions or natural entities – to comply through a complex web of interrelations. It is the capacity to engage, transform and translate which creates powerful artefacts (and lasting networks). To Callon, power relations may be grasped by describing 'the way in which actors are defined, associated and simultaneously obliged to remain faithful to their alliances' (Ibid.:19). In these descriptions we may find 'an explanation of how a few obtain the right to express and to represent the many silent actors of the social and natural worlds they have mobilized' (Ibid.). Following Callon, these house descriptions show how culture and the economy do not preclude each other (and also, that they are not separable entities), but work together in reinforcing and transforming artefacts such as the house and the land, hereby functioning as regulatory device cutting out unwanted actors and enactments. The description of the house highlights the continuous transformations of the physical and ideological expressions and enactments of culture and tourism at the destination. The chapter demonstrated how ideology, culture and human and non-human actors all worked and connected in creating and structuring relationships within and along these transformations. It was shown that the notions of tradition and development, culture and business are not opposites, as they are often portrayed, and that they are not neatly separable or a choice between good and bad. Instead, they may be seen as artefacts continuously created and strategically deployed in and through the destination network.

Chapter 9

Doing Górale. Identity, strategy and authenticity



'The culture is important here. Our part is to preserve it, to preserve what's left, so that it doesn't go as bad as it went in the countries of Western Europe. And at the same time we can make money in order to take care of culture'

Joanna B., tourism agency owner

So far, a number of actors and phenomena have been outlined and described through narratives based on various discourses and practices performed at the destination. The creation, transformation and contestation of destination places, foods, buildings, identities and services have been described as based on a variety of strategies or modes of ordering in which discourses, artefacts and practices were put to work in order to further and materialise a specific version of the destination. Many of these strategies are in some way or the other connected to the notion and ideology of Górale. A number of artefacts and practices related to Górale were surrounded with special meaning, interest or attention, also - but not exclusively - within the tourism industry. As a consequence of this important role which is so clearly accorded to 'things Górale' and Górale identity by many of the actors within the destination network, the notion of 'Górale' and how this is enacted will be further explored in the following chapter. Putting Górale in quotation marks indicates its present status as an analytical object, not as an objective substance. The notion of 'Górale' is seen as a fluid and constantly altering entity, connecting – as will be shown – to a variety of entities and artefacts. In the rest of the chapter, I will abstain from setting quotation marks for the sake of readability, but they are never the less implied.

My endeavours in this chapter are the following: First of all I argue that it is not by seeing Górale as a purified substance opposed to or outside of tourism, nor as a tourism-induced creation that we may grasp its longevity and strength. Rather, understanding the working of Górale is achieved by focusing on and addressing its interrelated and mutable character, suggested in the opening quote. It claim that it is the notion's heterogenic capacity which has led Górale to remain such a distinct and important, as well as contested, actor within the destination network. Secondly, I put the notion of Górale to work by displaying it both as an effect of and as something having an effect in the destination network. I will show how Górale is evoked and enacted in different discourses and practices. Furthermore, I show how Górale materialises at the destination and how it's consequences are managed. Lastly, I highlight the possibilities and the limitations of applying and performing Górale, by demonstrating how the notion of Górale is used and connected to destination people, places and practices. Based on this exploration, I argue that investigating the notion of Górale at the destination not only involves the examination into and of being, but more importantly of *doing* Górale. It is through the ongoing practice of 'doing Górale' that the notion continually becomes part of the destination network, while simultaneously being enabled by the network itself.

These investigative endeavours will be carried out through the pursuing of two complimentary questions. These concern the notion of Górale as it works and materialises at the destination as they ask '*What is Górale?*' and '*How is Górale?*'. In the first interrogation of *what* Górale is, I demonstrate how the notion has been shaped through time and through the linking to various people and practices. Hereby the idea of the newness of the culturalisation of work, which is often implied in sectors of the new economy such as cultural

tourism, is dismissed. By challenging identity as a pure substance and static state of being, I suggest, following the work of Schneider (2006) and Ekströmer (1991, 1993) to perceive the notion of Górale as *strategy*. Departing from these authors in the succeeding question of 'how Górale', the idea of Górale will be presented as a plurality of strategies. Moving on from the assumption that Górale is not, but rather *becomes* what it is, I offer a number of examples from the Górale restaurant and the 'place of culture' to show how Górale is articulated and negotiated by destination actors. This, it is suggested, is done along (at least) three lines, as *fake*, *real* and *pure* in and through a multiplicity of narratives, artefacts, events and practices related to, among others, music, costumes and skill. In closing, and based on the achieved realisations of Górale as destination strategies and as disparate and persistently contested sets of practices, I ask why the notion of Górale - as opposed to other identities or strategies - has become such a central feature to the tourist destination of Zakopane. Based on a discussion of authenticity and pointing back to chapter 5 on to the enactment of differences, I specify some of the heterogeneity of the notion of Górale, and some of the consequences prompted by its enactments.

What is Górale?

Numerous ethnographies, tourist brochures, guide books, conversations with both Górale and non-Górale of the region and Poles in general support the fact that the Polish highlanders are – or are perceived as - a distinct ethnic group with a strong sense and ascription of group identity. Hence, both outsiders and insiders ascribe meaning to Górale, or to what Schneider (2006) calls *Góralness*. But what is this *Góralness* and how may it be described at the destination, of which it is so clearly and conspicuously part? In the following, I start out by criticising the idea of the development of identities connected to 'cultural tourism work' as strictly related to a new cultural economy. I argue that Górale as identity has been created and developed in relation to tourism, since Zakopane first started to develop as a tourist destination in the early 19th century. In order to substantiate this claim, I use a painting from the late 19th century to show the historic ties linking Górale to tourism and the destination. By seeing this viable identity as partly tourism induced, I address the idea of destination culture and tourism as incompatible and mutually exclusive. I use quotes from fieldwork informants to further illustrate how the historically constructed and tourism-related creation of Górale identity is not perceived as a problem by (at least some) locals. Moving on from this realisation, adopting and discussing insights from other studies in Górale regional-ethnic identity, I discuss how an understanding of the notion of Górale may be seen as a strategy rather than an essence and investigate how this may be adopted into a socio-material narrative of the destination.

Newness and purity. A critique

Critical tourism studies intersecting research into labour and identity often involve the investigation of the relation between tourism, cultural identity and the creation of what is termed 'new forms of labour'. The studies often seek to investigate how an economic system coined as *new* (Löfgren 2003, Löfgren & Willim 2006), *cultural* (Du Gay & Pryke 2002) or *experience based* (Pine & Gilmore 1999, Bærenholdt & Sundbo 2007) affect identities through the transformation of the service, leisure and tourism industry. For instance, this is done by investigating the impact of increased expectations and demands for involvement,

genuineness or authenticity on the so-called cultural intermediaries or cultural brokers (Cohen 1985, Meethan 2001). As claimed by Elgaard Jensen and Westenholz (2004), this understanding is driven by an epochalist understanding of history, that 'dramatize present changes by making a contrast to a stable past' (Ibid.:2). Departing from grand-scale epochalist simplifications and a polarised debate on work and identity in which people either become corroded characters or free agents (Sennett 1998), break down or are set free, the authors set out to 'tell stories of the current transformation of work and identities that recognize the heterogeneity of work life' (Elgaard Jensen & Westenholz 2004:3). The authors make use of ethnographically detailed stories in order to show how change is performed in practice, and how reality is often better described as complex patterns of interference rather than just change from old to new. In the following I pursue a similar line of investigations in which broad scale claims are replaced by a closer look at the relation between work related practices and relational identity, as an emerging effect of on-going relations 'distinguishing or identifying people in the field of relationships' (Ibid.:4).



Walery Eljasz (1899) *Morski Oko*. Tatra Museum

In the context of my investigation, this critique challenging the 'newness' of the culturalisation of work and the labour forms explained through the emergence of a new economy finds support in a painting portraying a locally set host/guest situation from the 19th century. Originating from 1899, the painting by Walery Eljasz depicts a scene taking place by the lake Morski Oko ('The Eye of the See') situated outside of Zakopane.

The Morski Oko lake is renowned for its stunning nature which remains a popular tourism site, attracting thousands of tourists, often day-tripping from Zakopane. An interpretation of this scene has a Górale highlander serving as a local guide for the two women, a common and welcomed *nebengeschäft* for local shepherds at the time (Cooley 2005). We may think of the women, indiscernible from any other proper women from the European bourgeoisie, as visiting from nearby Cracow, from Warsaw or perhaps even from abroad. Showing them the home of the Górale, their highlander shepherd guide has taken them into the high Tatras. Similar to other European regions, it is a landscape which in the late nineteenth century was subject to an intense nationalisation and ideologisation⁹⁹. The Tatras were perceived by the Polish intelligentsia (of the at that time non-existing Polish nation state) as an isolated and untouched territory in which 'the essence of the nation' could be retrieved (Cooley 2005:59). It was the nest and cradle of something truly Polish, a place of freedom of the spirit, a place wild and free (Ekströmer 1991).

In the painting, the Górale shepherd stands on the bedrock by the lake pointing into the distance. He is indicating something to the two women which stand behind and above him on the rock face. The composition of the painting is one of contrast. The man, a Górale dressed in traditional woollen trousers and black felt hat, fur vest, coat and leather shoes, almost blends into his surroundings while the bourgeois women visually stand out as they are dressed in brightly coloured and finely tailored dresses and hats. Although the painting plays on a contrast between gender, class, provenience and clothing, it is not one of radical division. Rather than differences, it suggests the complementarities, and partial overlapping, between the Górale and the two 'bourgoises'. Hence, all three stand engulfed into in admiration of nature. One of the ladies carries a traditional fur vest over her arm. The other has a shepherd bag on her shoulder. Both hold wooden walking sticks in their hands. They have in some way appropriated parts of both local nature and culture as they stand overwhelmed by the surrounding scenery.

The painting challenges the assumption of newness in tourism related forms of labour. It upsets the idea of the selling and staging of the regional nature and culture as part of a novel work form belonging to the era of the Experience Economy. So do many other of the cultural artefacts and art productions of Zakopane at the time, such as novels, music compositions, architecture, and theatre plays set in the Polish Tatras or inspired by the Górale and their culture¹⁰⁰. These cultural products, most often created by non-Górale urbanites belonging to an upper-class intelligentsia, demonstrate that Górale culture and identity has long been engaged in an interaction both oriented towards and stimulated by outside visitors involving what is commonly termed as cultural staging, objectification and commodification. As argued by McFall (2004:30), it also shows how 'practitioners in the past, just like their contemporary counterparts, relied heavily on their

⁹⁹ For European examples of the nationalised landscape, see Löfgren (1989), for further Scandinavian examples Löfgren (1992)

¹⁰⁰ Among many others is the Harnas ballet of Szymanowski and the Zakopane style architecture developed by Witkiewicz. The lake Morski Oko has inspired a range of 19th century artists including the painters Walery Eljasz-Radzikowski, Leon Wyczółkowski and Stanisław Gałek, the poet Wincenty Pol, Adam Asnyk, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Franciszek Nowicki and Jan Kasporwicz and composers such as Zygmunt Noskowski (www.wikipedia.org).

consumption and lifestyle experiences in the conduct of their work'. This is illustrated in this 1845 writing of Zejszner:

'For quite some time now, there have been more people visiting the Tatras. The number of people is growing on a yearly basis. Górale proudly speak with the distinguished visitors, winning their hearts with their polite deference. Persistently praising their mountains, they recommend their exquisite spring water, they extol their sheep's buttermilk that will cure any sickness. Górale describe their poor country and question the tourists about the construction of their carriages and horse's tack' (In Cooley 2005:74).

The painting and quote show how the Górale people and region have long been connected to cultural tourism. This rejects the idea of selling culture as something new to the region¹⁰¹. In taking on the idea of the newness of culture-tourism relations, it is made clear that local culture and tourism have an intermingled past in which identity is not 'only' or 'pure' identity and work is not 'only' or 'pure' work. Rather, the two must be seen as inextricably intertwined.

Challenging the idea of newness of the culturalisation of work and the distinctive spheres of identity and work, the painting also challenges a second assumption of the existence of a clear-cut distinction between an outside and local culture and identity. As discussed in chapter 4, cultural tourism research often rests on an assumption of the existence of a one-way and somewhat deterministic connection between outside change and the local identity, in which the former - seen as separate and essentially different from the latter - destroys or in other ways impacts (usually in a negative sense) the later. Much tourism research exploring the connection between identity and tourism suggest that tourism is fundamentally a market driven and market oriented activity 'selling culture by the pound' (Greenwood 1989). An example of this is Ashworth and Larkham (1994) and their investigation of the damages caused by the development of the heritage industry. According to them, the heritage resources should ideally satisfy the demands and expectations of not one, but two groups of consumers, namely an external group of tourists and an internal group consisting of the indigenous population. These two groups are seen as having opposing and conflicting needs and expectations which, according to the authors, create conflict.

As a consequence of tourism's great significance, the authors foresee that 'pragmatism and the demand for tourist revenue may lead to heritage being oriented for external, rather than internal, consumption' (Ibid.:105). In their opinion, heritage hence loses its possibility to support, represent and consolidate local culture or identity faced with increasing and tourism induced pressure. It is true that increased commodification of heritage sites limit accessibility for locals (as well as for certain groups of tourists) and

¹⁰¹ When looking at the development of increasingly standardised tourism products in Zakopane today, one might even ask if tourism was not more 'cultural' or experience-based in the days of the partition, where the landscape was invested with so much symbolic meaning and essence by its visitors. It may be discussed if the emotional or experiential investment may be said to be in decline as younger and international tourists appropriate this place in new ways, for instance as an *experiencescape* (O'Dell & Billing 2005) rather than a *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 2006).

that privatisation or monopolisation may lead to exclusion, misrepresentation and disempowerment in heritage¹⁰². This is not the issue at stake in the current discussion. What I wish to point to instead is how Ashworth and Larkam in their distinction of internal and external consumers demonstrate a traditional opposition of culture and economy (in this case of tourism), in which culture is either seen as a self-contained instrument to promote or strengthen identity or as 'polluted' by pragmatic or economic considerations making it useless as an identity consolidator.

As was seen in the above, a relational exploration of culture at the destination of Zakopane suggests that tourism and culture have locally been identified, defined and practiced in a process of material and embodied reciprocity for over a century, if not longer. This suggests an alternative to what McFall (2004) terms 'the invocation of an idealized past in which economy and culture existed in a more bounded sealed-off world' (Ibid.:30). The narrative of the painting supports an alternative understanding in which the internal Górale heritage consumption is based on, created and articulated in connection to and partly by non-Górale to which it is therefore inextricably linked. The painting itself, its exposition at (and building of) the Tatra Museum in Zakopane, the scene of the painting and countless other motifs in music and literature, both national and Górale, are all part of the creation of what Górale is, what it means and how it is perceived and presented. As argued by McFall, and as shown in the next, the analytical distinction between culture and economy is 'surprisingly difficult to apply in instances of material practice' (Ibid.:29). Instead, 'the economy and the cultural can be understood as performed in material practices under particular arrangements and utilizing particular socio-technical devices' (Ibid.). This is how Górale culture and tourism may be approached at they have, previously and today, mutually engaged and developed over time at the destination through guiding, architecture, the appreciation of nature, food stuffs, cultural productions and other tourism related practices and artefacts. This connection has not turned culture and tourism into 'a whole', but has made them incomprehensible as separate and disassociated absolutes.

This relational understanding of the connection between tourism and culture seriously challenges Ashworth and Larkam's distinction between the external and internal as groups possessing – and defined according to - entirely different needs, expectations and strategies. Distinctive and clearly separate characteristics of culture and tourism were continuously challenged when talking to local informants about Zakopane's tourism history, where a blurred boundary between the two was articulated. Many informants acknowledged what they saw as an inseparability between an original local identity and its construction – like local journalist and mountain guide Maciek, who talks about the Górale and the traits with which they are portrayed:

'They were always independent. They always had private... their own property, even if it was very small. It was owned by them. And that is the reason probably that people grown [up] here are independent, loudly speaking up what they want. That is the background. And this culture became a part of the myth of Zakopane. Because the first discoverers of Zakopane like Dr.

¹⁰² Perhaps issues of privatization, monopolisation or other excluding factors are not inescapable and general features in heritage management which do not limit themselves to countries or regions in need of foreign currency.

Chałubinski and others who came here in the 70s of the 19th century, they found not only the countryside, the mountains, but also the people very interesting. And some of them really fell in love with them, creating not real, but mythical image of them. But that was the part of the history of the place and it still is until now. So why did it happen? Because tourists that are coming here, specially from Poland - because foreigners don't know about this - they *expect* that they will find here those horse carriages with a dressed man, folk music - whatever its quality - in the restaurant, that they will find the local menu with funny names connected with local tradition, which is completely not true'.

In this extract, Maciek interweaves traits of cultural identity such as independence and 'speaking up' with property and ownership. He then moves on to connect these with a myth created by outsiders sketching the history of Zakopane in terms close to what Hobsbaum and Ranger (1996) have termed the *invention of tradition*¹⁰³. He then explains how this myth today forms tourist's expectations, again generating tourism attractions in the shape of horse carriages, costumes, music and food dishes with names which are linked to local tradition in a way which is 'completely not true'. In this narrative, there is no evidence of a linear development, neither in the formation of identity nor in the tourism of Zakopane which appears as a network composed of heterogeneous and entities that vary and transform over time. The mayor of Zakopane also points to the invented character or traits of the place in portraying the atmosphere of the city as something partially created by people from the outside:

'There's been a very special atmosphere here, created over hundreds of years. Creating such an atmosphere is a very difficult thing, but we have it in Zakopane. I must admit that many anthropologists claim, that such an atmosphere was created by people from Warsaw, or people who came here in the middle of the 19th century, and fell in love with the Górale culture. They decided to stay and work here. It began with Chałubinski, Zaruski, Pawlikowski. They all came to live here. Most of the artist of the break of the 19th and the 20th century came here to create their work - that includes all the Noble prize winners. Thanks to this, Zakopane became a magical place, which attracted artists from all around Poland. They've created this atmosphere and the myth of Zakopane, which lives up till today.'

Both informants are explicit about the constructed aspects of the town, cultural features, myth and 'atmosphere' and acknowledge outsiders as important actors in the making of the place. What is interesting

¹⁰³ As a trained ethnographer/ethnologist it is not unlikely that Maciek is indeed familiar with this or similar works on the invented or mythological character of places and customs. As with many other informants, such as Małgorzata, restaurant owner and PhD in philology and Jan K., folk musician and architect, Maciek transgresses a boundary which is sometimes presumed between the academically trained field researcher and the informant. For a further methodological discussion on this issue of 'reversed' hierarchy or status between researcher and informants, see Czarniawska (2007) and Law (1994). It is noted however that the field material collected and applied in this present work was attempted collected and analysed in a symmetrical fashion. Following Law (1994), this means that all utterances are perceived as 'expert' observations and hold no more, no less weight or importance than others.

however is how this intermingling of invented and authentic, outside-generated or 'primordial' is addressed in such an undramatic and positive way.

The quotes by Maciek and the mayor illustrate that pragmatism and 'pollution' do not inevitably lead to a feeling of misrepresentation or disempowerment. On the contrary, they demonstrate the capacity and capability of Górale in partaking in the construction and staging of Zakopane, as an actor constantly enrolling and being enrolled into the destination network. Górale is not a neatly demarcated, stable substance which may be acknowledged in its singularity, but rather in its heterogeneous relations to other entities. The quotes reflect a continuous and integral historical and material relation between tourism and culture. It renders the question of where 'authentic' culture ends, and its tourism-induced counterpart begins, an impossible but also pointless one to answer. As suggested by McFall (2004:30) 'identity is best understood as expressed through historical, technical means which include work and consumption among a host of other variables. Identity is thus always, necessarily contingent upon a vast assemblage of techniques, practices and strategies through which subjects are enjoined to relate to and make sense of themselves'. As such, Górale identity is an ongoing process, a *patch-work* (Law: 2003). In other words, Górale is a *verb*, rather than a noun, continually conjugated to fit and shape a context. The potent blended and created character of the 'atmosphere' of the place and the role played by the notion of Górale in this process suggest that Górale is not only a random cultural remnant to the destination, but may in fact be seen as a - or rather several strategies.

Górale as Strategies

In his book *Fåglar och Buskar (Birds and Bushes)*, Melchior Ekströmer (1991) seeks to explain the great importance and meaning attributed of the notion of Górale as an ethnicity based strategy. This understanding helps him answer questions such as why anyone would want to live in the rough and meagre lands of the Tatras and why the Górale who do even seem to take such pride and apparent pleasure in it. Based on a fieldwork in the village of Ciche near Zakopane, Ekströmer argues that the ethnic strategy is driven by logic internal to the group which centres on outward demarcation and inward homogeneity. Górale identity is deployed in order to create, support and maintain 'the good life' in times of hardship and faced with crisis in the arid lands of Podhale. Inspired by Frederic Barth (1969), Ekströmer defines ethnic identity as a dialectic process between self-ascription and ascription by others. Ethnicity, which is seen not as a part of culture, but rather as culture is regarded as: 'the grouping of elements applied by a group or population for the purpose of the identification of self. It is important to emphasise that this mainly concerns a process "from within", that identification is based on the groups own perception of belonging, but also that this is naturally affected from the 'outside', through others vision of the specificity of the group [...]. In this lies the subjective in the description. However the *elements* which are part of the description are the ones traditionally perceived as objective: origin, "race", language, religion etc., not applied as labels attached by an outside

observer, but rather through a consideration of the understanding/experience [upplevelsen] of the various elements (Ibid.:31, my translation)¹⁰⁴.

Although this strategic understanding is useful in order to understand the workings of ethnicity as a classification system which takes into account a variety of external relations and circumstances, Ekströmers account of the functions fulfilled by Górale identity is based on an understanding of internal stability. Even in times of change, migration and privation, what are conceived as the elements applied to assert Góralness remain unchanging and rooted in tradition. This perception is conflicting with the notion of Górale in Zakopane, in which, as we saw expressed by the two informants, Górale may be stretched as 'objective' criteria are altered, bypassed, negotiated or made absent. Furthermore, Ekströmer in his account centres on the social stability and internal coherence within the group, making it difficult to use Górale as a way to account for and explain conflict or social divisions.

This attempt to integrate Górale as a strategy into a society marked by social differences is taken up by Deborah Cahalen Schneider. In her book *Being Górale* (2006), Schneider explores the specific identity politics taking place in the mountain town and region of Żywiec, situated 100 kilometres Northwest of Zakopane, as it is faced with processes of transition and increased globalisation. Prior to her departure, Schneider was told by a number of non-Górale Poles how the Żywiec Górale embodied 'a number of stereotypes, such as being less educated, rowdier and more ready to fight, fiercely independent, and generally ornery' (Ibid.:6). Not so convinced of the reality behind these stereotypes, and realising that the dialect was understandable to her in spite of warnings¹⁰⁵, she dismissed the existence of a certain *Góralness* prior to her departure. On her arrival she took it's 'evidence' - a few objects of Górale handicraft which she came across in the early stages of her fieldwork - as a 'romantization of the tradition' (Ibid.:7). However, a further familiarisation with the field of investigation gradually lead her to a realisation of how the Górale regional-ethnic identity was very actively deployed as a strategy faced with the post-socialist development both in a local, national and global context¹⁰⁶. In her book, Schneider describes how the Górale identity has been used through time as a way to mediate the relationship between local community and nation-state. Schneider argues that the relevancy accorded to the Górale identity is linked to class positions. She goes on to identify how notions of identity have historically been used to negotiate relations and develop strategies face to face with shifting state and economic systems (Ibid.:4). By doing so, local identity has succeeded to challenge the primary discourses of nationalism in political identity.

¹⁰⁴ In Swedish: 'Den uppsättning element en grupp eller en befolkning avänder för sin självidentifikation. Det är viktigt att understryka att det huvudsakligen rör sig om en process "inifrån", att identifikationen grundar sig på den egna uppfattningen om tillhörighet, men också att denna naturligtvis påverkas "utifrån", av andras syn på det specifika hos gruppen [...]. I detta ligger det subjektiva i beskrivningen. De *element* som ingår i beskrivningen är dock de traditionellt objektiva: härkomst, "ras", språk, religion etc., men här inte använda som etiketter påklitrade av en utanförstående betraktare, utan med hänsyn till upplevelsen av de olika elementen'.

¹⁰⁵ I also encountered this perception of Polish and Górale dialect as being something entirely different and mutually hardly comprehensible, both with Polish teachers at a language course in Cracow and in Copenhagen. It later became clear that all inhabitants in Zakopane with whom I and my Polish assistants met were able to 'switch' to Polish language and that often they were able and willing to speak in English. An eventual language mix-up was never a consequence of the local Górale dialect but rather of my lack of Polish language skills!

¹⁰⁶ Something which is also noted with reference to the house by Pine (1996)

In accounting for the Górale identity of the residents of Żywiec, Schneider shows how the appeal and importance accorded to the Górale identity is based on its potential usefulness as it is repositioned and entrenched in strategic endeavours: 'The Góral identity is not important to every Żywiec resident: its strength of appeal is based in large part on how useful people find it (Ibid.:8). According to Schneider being Górale means different things and is performed differently by various parts of the community. This is explained by the fact that 'Góralness' as identity is a strategy linked to class and driven by local class conflicts (Ibid.:9). Schneider identifies two versions of 'what it means to be Górale' promoted by a traditionalist *prewar elite* and a modernist *neocapitalist elite*: 'To bolster their claim as local authorities, the prewar elite class is attempting to keep Góral traditionalism and community insularity alive in the modern era. The emerging neocapitalist class, in contrast, claims that Góral identity is a valuable part of the nostalgic past of the community and modernity for Żywiec involves integration with the global capitalist economy and leaving behind local identity (Ibid.:180).

The two classes struggle 'over the emphasis on and interpretation of the Góral identity'. In this struggle it becomes manifest how 'their visions of the contemporary relevance of the identity correspond to their visions of the economic future of the community' (Ibid.:135). According to Schneider, both are rooted the portrayal by Polish intellectuals of the pure, rural soul of the Górale. Although these intellectuals saw it as a Polish *volkgeist*, the portrayal also reinforced the Górale's 'geographic imagination of themselves as separate from the Poles' (Ibid.:146). As a part of the class struggle in Żywiec, Schneider suggests that identity markers such as ostensibly traditional dress and crafts, or the dialect being used by people who normally speak standard Polish are adopted to reinforce specific meanings of Górale identity and specific social or moral claims to authority in the community. According to Schneider, Górale identity 'as conceptualized by members of the population is in dialogue with different external forces, depending on who the person is and how they are connected to groups outside Żywiec' (Ibid.:9). Hence, the identity or rather the discourse of a certain Górale identity and community provides people with strategies rooted in local patronage and local authority by which they may oppose or mediate a Polish nationalist development as well as global capitalism 'through a locally remembered and constantly reconstructed history of identity' (Ibid.:166).

Seeing Górale identity as a useful tool and calculated strategy to structure and reinforce social classes is helpful to understand the working of Górale. Unlike Schneider however, This present destination analysis does not incorporate a specific class element as starting point for the definition of the field of study, in this case the destination. Rather, it seeks to address social differences as effects created through the workings of the network. This initial investigation shows that pursuing an objective determination of what Górale *is* and who or what may be characterised as 'real' Górale is pointless. Instead, the above suggested how the possibility of referring to, aligning with (or rejecting) specific notion of Górale work as strategies through which hierarchy, class, unity and inclusion may be established. As shown by both reviews, the division of labour, differences in ownership, power inequality and other expressions of social disparity are created, at least partly, through the socio-material working of Górale. These strategic abilities clearly influence and

shape the destination. In the words of Joanna S., the person in charge of supporting and running cultural events from the mayor's office for culture, Górale is clearly identified as a strategy to attract tourists:

'I think that Zakopane itself – the folklore and the Górale tradition – is a very special place, and it's very difficult to find a similar one anywhere in the world. We have our own language – the Górale dialect is almost like a separate language [...]. We have our costumes, we have our culture, and that's the way we attract tourists here'.

Through a variety of artefacts, such as the dialect, folklore, tradition and costumes, both Zakopane as attraction and Górale as strategic tool are appointed and constructed. This leads us to the second question in investigating the notion of Górale, namely 'how is Górale', as it is articulated, performed and materialised at the destination.

How is Górale?

The above section described the notion of Górale as created through time and through a relational process between different actors. As argued, Górale may be analytically perceived as a tool applied within different strategies aiming at defining, ordering and managing the destination. But how is this carried out in practice? According to Murdoch, 'networks require a performance on the part of all enrolled elements' (Murdoch 1998:366). The question is what or rather *which* versions of Górale are pointed to and performed as important and conspicuous elements at the destination. This is examined more closely in the following. First, using an example of a Zimbabwean Bush pump, I argue how the notion of Górale is understood through its fluid enactment rather than a solid whole. Subsequently and using examples from the Górale restaurant, I describe how the notion of Górale is brought forward, enacted, negotiated, rejected or made absent in three ways, as *normative*, *operative* and *contested*.

Fluid Górale

The notion of Górale is one which is frequently referred to when asking to the specificity of the destination of Zakopane. A striking observation in Zakopane is the omnipresent references to 'Górale' in print and visual representations, through historical references, in the soundscape of the town centre, in symbols and iconography, in statues and art work, foodstuff and other sales items, in costumes worn by waiters and coach men or in tourism offers such as bonfires, sledge rides and dance and music performances. To the cultural analyst it is also a striking notion because of its elasticity and apparent broadness, which makes it connect to a broad range of services, products and such as a travel agency, tobacco shop and a language school who all use the Góral hat as symbol or a local chain of 'Góral' burger restaurants. Because Górale is not a solid character, the unproductive questioning in the above of *what* the notion is, is better replaced with an interrogation of what it looks like, what forms a part of it and where its boundaries are identified.



A local tobacco shop. Note the Górale silhouette!

The fluidity of the notion of Górale in connecting to changing objects, people, discourses and practices is similar to that of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump studied by De Laet and Mol (2000). Like the notion of Górale, the Zimbabwe Bush Pump is 'not an immutable but a changeable object, which has altered over time and is under constant review.' (ibid.:228). Rather, the pump is an actor, 'in spite of being neither human nor rational. But then again: the Bush Pump *does* all kinds of things [...] Arguably, it *acts* as an actor' (ibid.:226). Just as Górale, the Bush pump 'is not well-bounded but entangled, in terms of both its performance and its nature, in a variety of worlds' (ibid.:227). According to de Laet and Mol, the fluidity or flexibility of the object may not be reduced to a question of perspective, a question of how it looks from where we stand. Fluidity is a characteristic of the object under scrutiny, not created by our view of it or our 'perspective'. This fluid identity is not a weakness, as was argued in the former section, but rather an expression of or prerequisite to strength. Just as the Bush Pump, Górale might be contingent, but it is not 'vague or random' (Ibid: 237). Neither is it 'everywhere and *anything*' (Ibid.) but bound and defined as limited sets of configurations.

As noted by de Laet and Mol on the Bush Pump a description 'may already be slightly outdated by the time you read this text – though it won't have disappeared from the Zimbabwean villages where it is installed. For the Bush Pump 'B' type may not be made to be immutable, but it *is* made to last' (Ibid.:228). This is easily applicable to the notion of Górale. Although we may recognise that artefacts are variable, we still need

however to pick one or more versions for our description to show, in a delimited time and space, how *Górale* works. In the following, the notion of *Górale* is sought framed in relation to the *Górale restaurant*. I suggest how in and through this specific type of restaurant, the notion of *Górale* can be seen as being constantly negotiated and performed along three lines, as fake, real and pure. As I will try to show, these lines are used to tell stories about and to frame various practices concerning what *Górale* is or should be. Admittedly, to me the many *Górale* restaurants in Zakopane continued to represent only a slight fluctuation within a set theme. However, denominating which restaurants were 'authentic' through the identification of their owners, their décor, the provenience of staff, the musicians and their repertoire seemed a preferred and significant subject of discussion with many of my local informants. Hence, the *Górale* restaurant proved helpful to unfold a number of stories and practices of *Górale* at the destination. Through the following narration of the *Górale* restaurant presented to me in interviews and through participant observations, I shall try to show how the *Górale* restaurant could be seen as a centre of negotiation making it possible to address, appoint, appraise or reject strategies, techniques and practices of doing *Górale*.

Doing Górale at the restaurant. Fake or real

According to Maciek, the number of restaurants has increased rapidly in Zakopane over the past two decades:

'You know 15 years ago there was just one good restaurant [in Zakopane]. If you called me 15 years there would be probably one place where I could take you without being ashamed! And now on Krupówki Street there is around 60 restaurant, cafes and pubs of reasonably good standard'.

As Maciek continues, it becomes clear that it is not just *any* type of restaurant which has gained popularity and prospers. Maciek for instance mentions how a Chinese restaurant centrally located on Krupówki recently had to close down. The restaurant type which is gaining momentum is the *Górale* restaurant. This is further substantiated as Maciek recollects a recent incident in which the renowned restaurant Empire which had existed since the 30s changed its name to *Karczma Bacówka* (Shepherd's Hut Inn). As explained by Maciek, the owners changed the name for 'obvious reasons', which is connected to and help explain the general rapid increase in *Górale* restaurants.

'[The tourists] don't look for European restaurants in Zakopane, they want to find a local *Górale* inn. That's the reason for all those killed animals on the walls, very simple tables, all this decorum'.

Although different, international restaurants offer exist in Zakopane, such as McDonald's, the newly opened Brazilian *Churrasco*, the *Sphinx* oriental chain restaurant and the posh *Mala Szwajcaria* (Little Switzerland), the *Górale* restaurant is today by far the most widespread and popular. To Maciek, this is the case because,

as stated in a previous quote, tourists expect finding 'folk music - whatever its quality - in the restaurant, that they will find the local menu with funny names connected with local tradition, which is completely not true'.

According to Maciek, tourists are the reason and drivers of the great success and prevalence of Górale restaurants. However, his views on the Górale restaurant as driven and staged by tourist demand and of restaurant music and foods as invented traditions were disputed by other informants. Some of these informants attributed great value to these restaurants and credited them for their contribution to the continuation of Górale culture, especially in regards to music, as will be shown below. The question is how the role of the restaurant as cultural actor is evaluated. In other words, what are the standards, or criteria, which must be met in order to determine if a restaurant is real Górale? How and through what practices are these standards expressed? Although as seen in previous chapters, the business man behind certain restaurants played a part in the assessment of restaurants as real Górale, it was also based on an evaluation of the music and the bands, individual players, songs and performances of the restaurant, that they were categorized as Górale or not.

In most, if not all, Górale restaurants especially during the high season and on weekends, Górale musicians entertain the guests. Walking down Krupówki and adjacent streets, cheerful tunes could be heard as they flowed out on the streets, luring and inviting other guests to step nearer. According to Cooley (2005) and my own field records, the music played at the Górale restaurant carries great significance in determining its authenticity¹⁰⁷. As opposed to the other restaurant staff, the band is always Górale, as explained by Maciek:

'It's pretty complicated. Some of [the restaurant workers] are local people from here, villages around Zakopane, real Górale. But simply because we have very low rates of unemployment, sometimes specially in the high season, some of them are not Górale [...]. And because in these restaurants it is expected, they dress in the local costume as well. For them it's not a dress, it's a costume! But all of the guys who play music at the restaurants, they are locals. Most of them you could call them folk people, because most of them, for them it is a way of making a living'.

Maciek opposes these musicians from the folk [working] class to those not playing to make a living:

'These people like Karpel, Trebunia-Tutka, both architects by chance, they make their living in a different way. They play for fun, for keeping tradition alive, not for money.'

However, Maciek continues:

¹⁰⁷ For one example among many others of live restaurant music and dancing which has been uploaded to the internet and commented upon, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZUsTRN-ARE&feature=related>

‘The same band that plays in the restaurant down here, which plays that twisted music with plenty of elements from Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, they can, trust me, play absolutely authentic music at a wedding. So they accommodate to the needs, let’s say’.

According to Maciek, the difference between the two groups is not so much in the ability to play ‘for real’, but rather a matter of making compromises during ‘work hours’.

Indisputably, Jan K. enjoys the role as an unofficial authority on questions of Górale identity. Many other informants directed me to him when questions came up concerning the history and culture of Górale. Other than being an architect, Jan K., as most of his family, is also a musician and is often referred to as one of the most outstanding performers of Górale music. Many of Jan K.’s observations on Górale culture and identity centred on or were grounded in music, which he, similarly to the Górale culture, perceives as a blend influenced by many cultures over time. This is similar to Cooley, who in his ethnomusicological work on Górale music criticises what he calls the two central myths of Górale culture, namely its isolation and untainted character (Cooley 1998). In Cooley (2005), Jan K. is quoted for the following remark on the origin of Górale:

‘The Górale people feel it deep in their sub consciousness, that they aren’t of purely Polish origins. The entire Poland isn’t one hundred percent Polish, because it served as a big hall for all the European people. Podhale was a great part of this hall – there were many nationalities here – Romanians, Wallachian shepherds, Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians. (Cooley 2005:59).

Like Cooley through his scholarly work, Jan K. seeks to subvert ideas of isolation and purity by suggesting and performing musical connections beyond Podhale¹⁰⁸.

The Górale music was many times explained to me as very difficult to the untrained ear, a statement which I later experienced to be quite true. The Górale music in the restaurant hence worked in a field of balance, in which it attracted clients, but also risked to scare them off. This act of balance is acknowledged by Jan K.:

‘The real Górale music is really hard to listen to and they don’t play it in the restaurants too often. They usually do some Slovakian, Romanian, Hungarian songs. I’ve even heard a band performing “Hej Sokoly” [a popular Polish folk song originating from Ukraine]. The culture functions in a slightly different level now – on a commercial one’.

To Jan K. however, this commercial level of culture is not necessarily an evil. Asked what he believed to be the threats to Górale culture, he argues:

¹⁰⁸ For a further discussion of authenticity, musical connections and performative practices, see Cooley (1998)

‘Well, it’s a worldwide tendency with all these dangers, you know? We were never cut off from the world. I’m sure that if there was something wrong to happen to the Górale culture, it would have happened already. What we can see now is a renaissance of the Górale culture. It’s a commercial renaissance, because there’s a great need for it. There are many restaurants and the people play the music there. They play it well, they play it badly, but they do it’.

Jan K. acknowledges, even highlights, the crossovers of the commercial and the cultural. He interprets the foreign musical and cultural connections to Górale, not as a negative transgression, but rather as a part of a renaissance of Górale culture, a renaissance which is done, both in good and bad ways, through ‘doing it’. Asked whether the music in restaurants was authentic, he answered

‘The people who play in restaurants everyday are sometimes quite aware of the Górale culture, but they can’t force the guests to listen to proper music – they have to play what the guest wants to hear. When people play it with a lot of passion, others will come to listen in some time... This is what happens in the “Sopa” restaurant’.

Jan K. identifies awareness of Górale culture through the musical performance of restaurant musicians. In the quote he exposes the flexible and contingent character of its enactment, in which the tourist and the musician are engaged in a negotiation, in which both ‘proper music’, guest requirements, force, passion, and the appointment of a specific restaurant, the Karczma Sopa, is brought to the fore. This restaurant is also mentioned to me by Małgorzata, the owner of one of the oldest restaurant in Zakopane, which I shall return to in a moment. According to her

‘There is one restaurant in this street where you can always listen to good music. This is the Sopa. It is also a restaurant in traditional style. The owner, a friend of mine, is also a Highlander and musician, and that is why he sometimes plays there. He always has good musicians, good music. I envy him’.

Asked whether this good music is based on his skills to hire good people, Małgorzata repudiates:

‘No, he is a musician, and they are his friends also. And he has very good ears. So he wouldn’t allow [others] playing badly’.

Once again, the authentic performance of Góralness in the terms of music making cannot be referred to a strictly ‘cultural’ or ‘work related’ sphere. Rather, the music comes together through friendship, ‘good ears’, being owner, Highlander and musician, through both *having* good music and *making* good music. As sides of culture and identity are joined together with musical and business-related skills in Małgorzatas statement, it is unclear whether she envies him his skills as a musician, his ability to attract other good and authentic musicians or the reputation of his restaurant, in short whether she envies his musical, cultural or business

talents! However, as Górale music is assembled through friendship, good ears and skills, it works to enact the restaurant as Górale and to credit it both in business and cultural terms.

The intermixture of commercial success and cultural valorisation enable a number of versions of Górale to be performed through music at the Górale restaurant¹⁰⁹. These are elements which are negotiated and measured on a scale of authenticity, elements which are simultaneously resulting in and based on an adjoining of business and culture. This construction allows for a range of combinations, enabling Górale to be identified and performed in various ways. A Górale musician may be playing Hungarian tunes, but as long as he is Górale, he is still a warrantor for the *possibility* of playing real Górale music in other places, such as weddings. Or he may not be playing so well, but he is still *doing it*. Someone may be the owner of a restaurant business, but might still be bestowed with high Górale credibility because of friendship or skills (and/or being Górale).

However, as will be shown in the following, the notion of Górale is also connected to another site at the tourist destination, namely the *the place of culture*. In the following, I use the place of culture to show how various practices are identified as missing and as marginalised at the destination, and how practices of the place of culture are seen, oppositely to restaurant practices, as necessarily and essentially being pure.

'The other leg is missing'. Absence and purity of a Górale place of culture

Joanna runs a tourist agency in Zakopane and is involved with many cultural tourism projects, such as the mountain folklore festival and the planning of an architectural trail. In her opinion,

'If you walk along Krupówki today, you won't find a single inn where a Górale band plays music the Górale way. They play like the Slovaks, Hungarians, like Gypsies. That's because Górale music is difficult. An average tourist couldn't stand it for too long. There is no balance. OK, I agree [it is difficult to listen to], so when I order a band for a group [of tourists], I ask the guys to do ten minutes of orthodox playing, and then the easy stuff. But people who would like to listen to real music don't have an opportunity to do so. That's because the other leg is missing'.

But what is this other leg and how exactly is it 'missing'? To Barbara B., a local artist working with glass painting, this missing leg was expressed as the lack of a *place for culture*. According to her, Zakopane is a difficult place to display traditional arts:

¹⁰⁹ As was seen with the cheese, it also simultaneously enables the restaurant to transform and travel itself. An example of this travelling is seen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fymnGdF4JEI> featuring a small commercial for the *Karczma pod Zbójem*. After a short introduction displaying a stunning Tatra mountain view and a wood piece of a Górale and his axe (*ciupaga*), a panorama of the wooden interior and Górale décor of the Karczma is projected. Although the inn as well as the menu presented could have been found on Krupówki or anywhere else in Zakopane, the add lets us know that it is located on 207 Radford Road, Nottingham!

'There is no place for it. The city government is not interested in it. For example, give the people a big room for exhibitions. It was my dream that in this big room all of us, everybody who do something in crafts, drawing, and glass painting, would have for instance three pictures and some short information about the artist. And then people that come to Zakopane may visit by calling [the artist] if they would like to see more'.

Along with her husband, who is also an artist, Barbara B. has a private exhibition room in her home, where interested tourists are invited to look around. Giving tourists this possibility is important for her because

'for example when I go to other countries, for me it is nice to see people's houses and enter the home. Because you get to see true life, true culture. And I very much like it when the foreign people visit us, because we get to show our culture, our house and the atmosphere inside our house. It's very important. People get a different impression from our country. And Zakopane and the Podhale region are very rich in culture'.

To other informants alike, this missing leg, or absent possibility to listen to real music or to exhibit or see artistic products reflect the impossibility of displaying and practicing certain versions of Górale culture. Several informants expressed concern of the exclusion of certain parts of Górale culture and some even attempted to fight against what they saw as a lack of visibility and significance. An example of a deliberate counter-strike is Małgorzata, the part owner of a renowned and long-established restaurant and great-granddaughter of the original founder. Through the restaurant's many exhibitions, not to mention its well-attended opening receptions, where many local dignitaries are to be spotted, Małgorzata and the restaurant work as active participants in representing, displaying and providing room for Górale culture. In the restaurant, examples of Górale material culture are displayed in changing exhibitions, and on opening nights local handicraft, artistic skills, music and foods are displayed. Małgorzata mentions painting on glass, Górale furniture, the sowing of highlander dresses, blacksmith work, along with music, dancing and traditional Christmas carol singing as examples of the exhibits.

In her attempt to provide a place for the showing of crafts and artistic and cultural practices which have difficulties of being made known or take place elsewhere, Małgorzata opposes her undertakings in the restaurant to that of galleries:

'I don't try to be a competitor to the galleries, because I am not. There are a lot of beautiful galleries [in Zakopane]. But they are for professional art. I just try to show it to our people. Sometimes they live in the next house, and the neighbours don't know what beautiful things they are making. I try to take them out of the shadow. And for them, I think it is important, because they have no opportunity to show themselves'.

Małgorzata keep these exhibitions running because, according to her, showing these practices and results of wood carving, embroidering, forging, dancing, painting and singing are important and necessary, both to see and to show:

'Many people are coming here to look, so probably people need it. And local people, they have no place to show themselves. So that was the reason why I started to do it'.

Małgorzata points not only to commercial galleries, but also to the local government for their inability to provide a place for cultural, non-commercial displays:

'I asked about [why there was no place to show], because I was in the city council three years and responsible for the culture. And I try to get them to change it, but with no success'.

Małgorzata laments the inability for people to gain access to see and for some artists to display their arts and crafts, since to her are important not because they are necessarily 'traditional', but because they are hand-made (opposed to being made 'by machines and computers'). The difficulties of exhibiting the hidden or, hand-made and often innovative practices of craftsmanship are reflected in the story of a cabinetmaker, which Małgorzata had recently exhibited:

'A few houses from here lives a man, who is doing wonderful furniture. Even for the Pope he has made a chair. Nobody knows about it. And the people were very surprised when they saw [the exhibition]. It was difficult because the things are quite big; they were difficult to move. But we did it and also showed some things in photos, because it was not possible to bring everything here. [...] I was in his house, where everything is made by him. And probably it is the only home in Europe where the dishwashing machine [cover] is also carved in wood. Because his wife said: "We have a beautiful kitchen, everything is carved in wood!". So he had to make a special cover for it. Probably the only one in the whole world! And his wife does embroidery, so they exhibited themselves together. So that was a very nice evening, also because his whole family was here'.

In this story, a variety of practices and entities are combined, such as the participation of the wife and attendance of family, the innovative and unique character of the artefacts, the Pope, the size of the wooden furniture and photos of it. In this process, a place of (and for) culture (as well as 'a very nice evening') are enacted.

Unlike the above situation at the restaurant in which culture and business, the outside and the inside, were connected into an enactment of Górale and stitched together into relatively smooth or partial connected wholes, the place of culture was articulated as a place in which cultural practices could unfold in opposition

to the commercial or the commodified. For instance, Barbara B. imagines the place as a non-commercial sphere, even a home, where outside visitors and artists interact:

‘A lot of interesting people make fantastic things, fantastic art. But it is a problem that a lot of people which are great talents have no possibilities to invite the tourists to their house because they have no room to show their pictures, sculptures or wood crafts’.

In her outline of the place of culture, either as her own restaurant or the non-realised public building, Małgorzata speaks of it as an antithesis to the professional place of art:

‘The other galleries, professional galleries they want to earn money also. [...] The city gallery, the big one, there are beautiful exhibitions, but professional mostly’.

The place of culture is articulated by both Barbara B. and Małgorzata as a place distinct from economy and professional arts, as illustrated by Barbara B.: ‘

You can have like “Krupówki culture” which you have in very many places. But you can also have place where, like here, tourists come and say - like in our guest book – “we love it!”.

Unlike the restaurant, in which negotiable and intertwined cultural and economic practices were unfolded (perhaps into what Barbara B. terms *Krupówki culture*), it is a place where people could interact in non-economic relations. Although Małgorzata and Barbara B. are both economically involved with and relying upon the selling of products and artefacts at their imagined or specific place of culture, it is the pure nature of the Górale artefacts and exhibitions practices, which is brought to the fore. Also, the necessity of the place of culture and its central role for both exhibitor, ‘our people’, but also ‘visitors’, displays it as central to the destination.

As seen in the above, the quality and the repertoire of the restaurant musicians often became the subject of discussion in interviews focusing on the ‘survival’ and current situation of Górale culture. At the same time, the music played in restaurants became a way to evaluate the restaurant. As such, the Górale music in restaurants (either seen in direct connection to or as the antithesis of music played in a non-touristic area) could be used as a marker of both authentic Górale culture and real Górale restaurants. This establishes a connection between identity, tourism, culture and business and between the production and consumption of music as both cultural practice and product. Hereby their overlapping, mutually defining and entwining relations are displayed. As opposed to this, the place of culture was articulated in contrast to the restaurant as the missing leg in the practice of Górale. Contrary to understanding the missing leg in its literal sense as a ‘threatened’ or absent site of exclusion, as mentioned by some informants, I suggest instead to see it as a necessary and complimentary enactment of Górale to that of the restaurant. In and between both notions, patterns of absence and presence (Law & Singleton 2005) helped create Górale both as a *fluid* and *yet pure*

artefact. Concurring with Michael (1996), one could say that the network, in this case of Górale, is 'rendered durable by the way that actors at once occupy the margins and the core, are the most outspoken critics and the most ardent stalwarts, are simultaneously insiders and outsiders – in sum, are ambivalent (Ibid.:65). In these ambivalent and multidimensional networks containing 'relatively obscure associations and roles – that is, where there is a network-within-a-network – actants have many resources to draw upon which, while problematizing certain components of the original network, can ultimately contribute to its durability' (Ibid.:65). It is by dedicating our attention and our descriptions to the ambivalent, fluid status of the network as well as the multiple memberships and multiple marginalities within them that we are able to understand their resilience.

Why Górale?

According to Cooley (2005), Zakopane today has entered the initial stages towards global mass tourism, which he terms the fourth wave of migration to Zakopane (Ibid.:78). According to informants and tourism researchers, this poses a challenge to the Górale culture. As shown in this chapter, the notion of Górale is an ongoing construct encompassing a heterogeneous set of variable actors at the destination of Zakopane. By inquiring into what Górale is, it was argued that the idea of seeing Górale identity as threatened by cultural tourism is based on epochalist and dualist understanding of both Górale and its 'challenger' as localised, homogenous entities. Both the existence and ongoing transformations of Górale as a weighty and conspicuous actor at the destination of Zakopane is an effect of a complex network whose working has been described in this chapter.

Shifting the focus of the investigation of Górale from *being* to *strategy*, the attention was turned to *how* Górale is. It was proposed to describe the notion of Górale as fluid and as created in the intertwining of economy, tourism, work and identity. This was done at two destination sites, the restaurant and the 'place of culture'. The first site showed how Górale was used as a way to evaluate authenticity, not only in the sphere of identity, but also by pointing to the 'good' Górale restaurant. For this purpose, a multiplicity of different notions were engaged, such as musical skills, friendship, provenience, commercial ties, 'doing it', and 'good ears'. The way of constructing Górale at the restaurant within a negotiable and pliable cross field of fake and real, of objective and subjective criteria (as also retrieved in Ekströmer's definition of ethnicity in the above), was opposed by the second site, the place of culture. Through this site, which was articulated as the 'missing leg' at the destination, Górale culture was enacted as an ideally pure undertaking in which economic relations were negated or made absent.

The description of these two understandings of culture demonstrates them as partially connected and mutually supportive. The 'pure' cultural notion provides legitimacy to Górale by emphasizing its authentic value and essential importance to people. By emphasising this inherent value, the sanctioned, pure Górale version interacts with what informants referred to as 'Krupówki culture' or 'part of a commercial renaissance', namely the notion of Górale in which economy, work, identity and practice are not kept separate, but are constantly blended in new (and surprising) performative combinations. Although the notion of Górale at the

restaurant was evaluated and enacted according to standards of authenticity by informants, it contained an explicit element of economy. This element, although silenced, was also accommodated into the place of culture. This way, both notions are examples of fluid and interconnected strategies making it possible to *do Górale* in various ways in various places at and through the destination. A question however remains in this unravelling of Górale identity, namely '*why Górale*'. Why was it Górale that obtained and Górale that continued to maintain a role as warrantor for the authentic?

As argued by Meethan (2001) on the creation of authenticity, 'it is a fundamental error to assume that there is a universal category of authenticity composed of innate, essential cultural attributes. Authenticity, therefore, needs to be seen as a category that is created and recreated in contingent circumstances, sometimes serving to uphold political or ideological positions as much as catering for the tourism market' (Ibid.:91). This understanding is supported by Cooley (1998, web document) stating that 'Authenticity is not something out there to be discovered; it is made constructed in a process of authentication [...] the issue is who has the power to represent whom and to determine which representation is authoritative?'. Instead of asking into whether something is authentic or not, one should direct the question to how power is distributed and tools are created in ways allowing to represent and to tell stories about Górale identity, as we saw at the two aforementioned destination (and identity) sites. The different notions of Górale evoked and enacted in the above point to, but also negotiate, stretch and stitch multiple worlds and practices. These Górale notions took part in the creation and recreation of authenticity. By claiming and enacting authenticity, Górale is not only constructed and confirmed as an identity, but also works as actor in the destination construct. This construction site is, as suggested by Meethan in the above, not only one of tourism, but also one of politics, identity and ideology.

An effect of Górale ideology is exemplified in the writing of Cooley (2005) in which he criticises the failure to account for a substantial Roma population in Zakopane. Cooley notes how 'Górale ethnicity is politicized. Certainly this is the case in Podhale today, where who is and who is not Górale is a social, cultural, and political point of everyday conversations and effect how business is done, how elections are won, and how music is made. The exclusion of Jews and Roma from the consideration of Górale ethnicity and the settlement history of Podhale reminds us that ethnicity itself is a boundary-making enterprise which creates socio-political groups that are only as inclusive as they are exclusive – one is either in the group "Górale" or not' (Ibid.:69). By arguing that identity, or ethnicity, 'is an invented classification system that is socially constructed and maintained, and that is culturally articulated' (Ibid.:71), the attention is directed towards relations and consequences of this strategic enterprise, which is both enacted through and continuously creating absences and presents, differences and sameness.

Chapter 10

Górale and golfing on CNN.

Insights on destination doing, ordering and difference



The international festival of mountain folklore is held in Zakopane at the end of August in the tourism peak season. It is one of, if not *the*, biggest returning events in town with an extensive program, which features many troupes of folk dancers from the mountainous area of Europe and a few other alternating countries from around the world. For a week the dance troupes contest in various categories. The overall winner is awarded with a golden ciupaga¹¹⁰ (Górale axe). In 2007, the 39th festival took place in spite of many difficulties, which up until the last moment made it unsure, whether the event would take place or not. For instance, finding a sponsor and securing the economy had proved troublesome. But in the end and after many speculations, as so many times before, everything came together. As stated by many informants, one could not really imagine the festival *not* being held in Zakopane. This in spite of all the difficulties and clashes of opinions, which according to many of the current and previous organisers and others involved, was apparently the order of the day. Because of the importance accorded to this festival by locals and tourism planners (and ethnographers, see Cooley 2005), I had hoped to follow and describe the organising and holding of the event as one of the ways in which the destination was being done and negotiated by some of its actors. As I soon realised however, identifying and following stakeholders and actors involved in the organisation and execution of the event in their activities proved too complicated and cumbersome a task, especially without a more in-depth knowledge of the local Górale and tourist organisations, of the economic and organisational structure of the steering group and of the Polish language.

This and several other projects of tracing activities and stakeholders turned out to be impossible within the set timeframe and with the resources at my disposal. Another of these early failed endeavours were to 'match' or compare the doings and ordering of local actors to that of tourists in order to describe how these were compatible or in some way colliding. However, although I did talk to some tourists during my fieldwork, they and their doings on site became somewhat absent in many of the destination analysis, as I came to realise during my writing up. This - of course - does not imply that tourists do not have an effect on the construction or enactment of the tourist destination. So why are they not explicitly part of the present descriptions? Is it that the effects of tourism were so massive and so seemingly persistent, that the descriptions of discrete practices of single tourists became almost invisible or difficult to single out and were more easily observed or described based on holiday recollections retrieved from facebook, flickr, youtube various blogs? Was it caused by the fact that the practices of tourists in their short-termed passing through the destination are too hard to observe or that the methods and techniques to collect them are simply inadequate? I have no single answer for the question of why tourists are not more present in my descriptions. It does show, however, that the assembled narratives, pictures and observations unfolded in the thesis are not representative of the opinions or practices of a majority or of certain segments of the local population or of tourists. Also, they confirm that socio-material network descriptions (and the researchers who perform them!) are not suited for all types of investigations, but – as other methods and research tools – have their limitations and weaknesses.

¹¹⁰ See Cooley (2005) for an account of the Mountain festival.

An advantage of the ANT-inspired analysis is however the possibility of involving methods into the research which contain a higher sensibility towards of intertwining and non-coherent destination entities and narratives. Not only does ANT claim that the world is heterogeneous and complex, which is hardly a revelation in itself. It also provides tools by which this complexity can be analytically translated and ordered as *fractionally coherent* networks and entities (Law 2002). Without resorting to reductionism, it shows how the world is composed of actor-networks which are enacted in multiple ways, yet also remain somehow stabilised through their purification and ordering. ANT asserts that the patterns which appear (or disappear) when drawing things together or apart, may be used not to build large and coherent chunks of knowledge, but rather to modestly point to the joint, recurrent, yet changeable ways of the ordering of and doings in and through networks. As already stated in the introduction of this thesis, these patterns are not one-on-one descriptions mapping the reproducible or generalisable nature of the tourist destination as an absolute entity. Rather, it is the socio-material and relational character of the destination and the stories of relational processes and enactments generated by this approach which are of interest.

In the following, while carefully avoiding an unambiguous, clear and firm conclusion, I suggest two types of *insights* to be drawn from the approach and findings of this present work. By applying a socio-material approach to a small corner of the mountain folklore festival mentioned in the above I seek to demonstrate how this approach may help to address networks, actors, doings and effects of the tourist destination. First, I will show how socio-material analysis unravels and thereby creates insights concerning the complexity and the ordering of specific networks, in this case Zakopane. Secondly, I will discuss what more general insights are provided by this approach in relation to our understanding of the destination. Lastly, I argue and illustrate why recognising and keeping an eye on ordered complexities in tourism research are of importance.

Specific destination: Enter Górale

The ad pictured in the above was just one of many which were hung from lamp posts and suspended as streamers across Krupówki Street before the beginning of the mountain folklore festival. According to actor-network theory, these ads must be seen as actors in advertising Zakopane. What is created as effect from this working is the definition of Zakopane as a place of mountain folklore and culture. However, pointing to the ad and the event *in itself* are not enough to understand this working. These entities do not work alone but must be involved into a network by the linking to other entities. This is seen in the ad as it features the new sponsor of the event, namely Tatra Beer. It is, at least partially, this product - or perhaps more precisely the multiplicity of actors 'behind' the beer making this entity work – which financially makes the festival viable and hence doable. However, similarly to the festival event, the Tatra beer does not work alone as a 'pure' commercial product. In order to become a commercial product, it must be associated with a number of heterogeneous entities. One such association is established through its name, 'Tatra', geographically connecting it to the Tatra Mountains. As stated by its slogan, it is a beer with character, an identity trait often associated with the Tatra Górale. Another connection is the picture in the ad in which three men gather around a mountain camp fire with Tatra beers in hand. They toast and smile. The man in the middle is

wearing a leather jacket, t-shirt and jeans, while the other two are wearing outfits indicating their Górale provenience: white woollen trousers and a Górale hat. The scene suggests, that 'modern man' has been included into this exclusive group through the ritual of beer drinking, a scenario which does not seem far from other advertising designs promising group inclusion and exclusivity through the consumption of specific products. On billboards along the busy Krupówki Street featuring this ad of the three campers, a catchphrase has been added stating "No stress in Zakopane".



A billboard hung up by the crowded and busy Krupówki Street showcasing 'No stress in Zakopane'

As stated by Law and Singleton (2005), presence also implies a set of absences as 'not everything can be brought to presence' (Ibid.:342). The network is always 'a pattern of presences and absences' (Ibid.:343). Therefore, describing the network not only implies seeing what is present, but also what is othered and what is made absent. In the ad, cultural entities are made present and put to work in order to connect the product to the Tatras, to a Górale identity of strong character, to the folklore festival (and the possibility for 'modern man' to meet the Górale?) and to the tourist destination of Zakopane, in which life is easy and stress-free. Although the busy Krupówki Street and the tourists which crowd it are prerequisites to printing and sticking the ads to house gables and lampposts and for Tatra beer to sponsor the festival, these are necessarily made absent in the reciprocal construction of the beer, the festival and the destination. Although tourists and the selling of products and services are all necessities to uphold the networks of the beer, the festival and

the destination, these entities and activities are absent in the representations of the construct of these three entities.

The socio-material approach demonstrated above is a small-scale example of the purification of the destination. This purification connects to Górale folklore and identity, to nature, to woollen pants and shell-rimmed hats. This exemplifies the effect and workings of the notion of Górale to the destination construct. By seeing the destination as a ongoing construct and a one affected by a specific Górale ordering, differences were identified (as seen in chapter 5 and 9), places were negotiated (as in chapter 6) and objects were being made or themselves acting as producers of destination (chapter 7 and 8). What came to be part of this construct as both actors and effects were entities such as culture, tourism development, identity and authenticity. By processes of representation, differentiation and negotiation, various objects, identities and practices were highlighted or made absent by connecting to or being cut from the notion of Górale and from the destination network. Showing the notion and identity of Górale as a strategic ordering device confirmed the understanding of there being powerful forces at play in constructing and structuring the destination. However, it challenged the understanding of these forces as strictly being one-way processes of globalisation, commodification and commercialisation. Instead, the socio-material approach pointed to the heterogeneous capacities contained within 'Góralisation'. It showed how destination actors and performances, such as the mountain folklore festival and the Tatra beer, align with and draw upon many different resources, entities and notions. These are interesting to address because of how they are connected into constructs which are neither 'purely cultural' nor 'strictly commercial' activities.

General destination

The second type of insights to be drawn from this thesis concerns the study of the destination as a socio-material and relational entity. As introduced in the first part of the thesis and as demonstrated throughout the analytical chapters, the socio-material and relational approach of this thesis creates a new understanding of the destination as a network constantly created, ordered and challenged by human and non-human actors. As a distillate of the analysis presented in this thesis, the above example illustrates the materiality, the heterogeneity and the ordering of the destination. It shows how places are done, how things act in their associations to other thing and humans, and ultimately how this doing and working create effects and differences and enacts different versions of reality.

The proposed version or enactment of the tourist destination sees it as 'a pattern of oscillations that cannot be told in a single and coherent way' (Law 1997:8). As such, the tourist destination 'hangs together precisely *because* it oscillates and embraces ambiguities as a pattern, as an actor network, as an actor-network that cannot be told as a narrative in its ambivalences and Othernesses' (Ibid.:8). This means that a destination or its description or analysis never adds up. The destination does not fall into place as a neat picture or as one consistent narrative; it can not be hung up on a single nail or put into a single, solid and stable framework. Perhaps the former chapters of analysis reflected this inability - and unwillingness - of the analytical work to coherently narrate the destination. I hope that what emerged instead of a watertight packaged conclusion is

a pleated patchwork displaying the constant work of heterogeneous destination actors. This uneven, yet at least provisionally connected patchwork emerged as destination actors strived to exert their version of the destination, were aligned into that of other, more powerful actor or were altogether made absent in the destination construct. This revealed the destination as a construct simultaneous framed, spacious, inconstant and indeterminable.

The interests launching this approach concerned how some people, artefacts and performances were included into the destination network while others were made absent. How was the destination network held together, ordered and cut (Strathern 1996)? The socio-material approach sought to answer this by addressing the complexity and entanglement of the places, events, phenomena, actors and objects of the destination through close descriptive and process-oriented methodology focusing on contingencies (Michael 1996). The approach also sought to challenge taken for granted categories such as the destination (chapter 2) and cultural conflict (chapter 5) as a start of the analysis, rather seeing them as effects of the actor-network. Efforts were aimed at describing some of the work contributing to the creation of Zakopane as a tourism destination in order to offer a fuller understanding of how the destination is constantly assembled and enacted in particular practices involving the interaction of human and non-human actors.

But what do these descriptions tell us? Is it possible to *conclude* anything based on a compilation of stories such as these? And if so, what may be concluded? As stated by Law (1997), 'we are witnessing a shift in the character and the role of narrative [...] For if we are no longer able to draw things together to tell great stories about the growth or decline of networks, then what is there to tell? No doubt there are many possible responses. But one is this: that we need to attend to lots of little stories, and then to the patterns that subsist *between* those stories, patterns that will often *not* reduce themselves to the chronology of narrative, patterns that do not form a chronological narrative - because there *is* no narrative' (Ibid.: 8). Instead of presenting a full and coherent narrative, the descriptions in the previous chapters were presented as stories. These stories told about tourist agents and restaurant owners, sheep cheeses, chalk tags, hostels, mountain guides and folk musicians. At the same time, and through the descriptions of various performances of the destination actors, they showed how people, artefacts and discourses were assembled, ordered, enacted and made absent or present not only in the version of the region (i.e. as a delimited spatial entity, see chapter 6), but also as networks, fluids and fire (Law & Singleton 2005, see chapter 7). This pointed to how in and by these actors, and through these processes, a number of effects were produced; effects such as place, difference, and Górale.

Why heterogenic descriptions matter: Golf on CNN

But why, one could ask, does it matter to seek such a confusing, non-coherent and fickle description of the destination, when clearly other approaches, as described in chapter 4, are so much more appropriate to provide clear and concise definitions and to offer tools to measure and market the destination? As I addressed in chapter 3 and exemplified in chapter 4 of the thesis, we as researchers are part of enacting the destination through our analytical work and our descriptions, through the questions we pose and the

answers we propagate. I could, and hopefully already have, argued for methodological and ontological advantages of applying a relational and socio-material approach. What I will try to address in this final story from Zakopane, is that what ultimately matters is how we as humans are confronted with socio-material orderings and absences. Hereby, I wish to stress that critically addressing and improving the enactments and constructions that surround us by pointing to their multiplicity and to them being the effects of numerous negotiations and resistances must never be abandoned.

During my stay in Zakopane, I was invited to a high school to present my project to the students. My hope was that this would enable me to collect some material of the students' own views of Zakopane as a tourist destination through our discussions and open-end questionnaires. As I handed out the questionnaires, I encouraged the students to share their opinions on tourists and their thoughts on the impact which tourism and Zakopane as a tourist destination had on their lives. For instance, what did they conceive as 'good' tourism and what were the positive and negative effects of tourism according to them? I also asked about what they would show tourists if they had the chance and what they would not. In my answers, many 'typical' and predictable ideas and opinions were aired as the students suggested displaying Górale culture, the Zakopane-style architecture and food as well as the mountains. Other answers were more unexpected, either in their total disregard for or in their hostility towards tourists or in a not uncommon lack of reflexivity on the matter, showing that tourism does not necessarily perceived as affecting the lives of locals living at a tourist destination. A few students altogether dismissed the Górale culture and people as something special or positive, as was also seen with the Janosik 'counter-graffiti'. A student even wrote under the question 'What would you not show to tourists?': 'Górale'. The student substantiated her or his choice by how Górale were rude and drunk, hence referring to other less flattering stereotypes of Górale Highlanders! Altogether, the answers reflected the impact, but also the negotiations, oscillations and absences constantly performed at the destination.

When inquiring about – and somehow expecting – heterogeneity, finding it is perhaps not unexpected. More surprising was a comment which came up during the following discussion where a girl of approximately 15 raised her hand. She told me about a TV commercial which she had coincidentally come across on the American news channel of CNN. It was a commercial advertising Poland as a tourist destination to business travellers, as I later saw myself (after hours of CNN news watching!). The girl told me that the commercial was showing Poland as the perfect place to play golf. However, as she said, 'I have never seen a golf course in my life!'.

This anecdote is not intended to criticise or dispute the promotion of golf tourism in Poland, for which I am sure the country offers many fine options. Instead, I wish to focus on the situation in which the girl is faced with an image of Poland unrecognisable to her. The reaction of astonishment and even anger which the student sought to convey bears some resemblance to that of Kasia in chapter 8. In Kasia's case, her space for action was cut and her connections to what was otherwise her birth place were limited or othered as she did not meet requirements of ownership or ethnic origin. As a fine textbook example of re-branding, this

commercial shows how destinations are involved in and become subjected to simple, efficient communication strategies developed as part of an ever more competitive global environment in tourism (Morgan et al. 2004). However, when relying on evermore simplistic and universalistic messages in the hope of reaching more people, destination promotion loses the capacity to track or represent the heterogeneous entities involved in the destination construct. In constructing a simple and efficient image and message of a place, the workings between its entities are purified and made absent. As its scope broadens, the message is narrowed down and destination complexity is lost (McLeod 2006). As a consequence, the student did not recognise the re-branded version of Poland presented in the CNN commercial. To her, the place and practices shown as representations of this national tourist destination was completely unfamiliar and unrelated to her and her images of and experiences with Poland.

In a relational understanding, the question regarding this commercial is not only, as with the case of Górale, which consequences a strong focus or importance on one, rather than another or several characteristics of the destination may have on its actors. It is not only a question of ethics to be posed to tourism developers and promoters, nor merely one of whether the lack of recognition or connectivity renders it unrecognisable to local citizens. It is not *only* about creating an trustworthy or credible destination product. Ultimately, it is a question of whether it may truly *work*. As shown in this thesis, the purity conveyed by an image or representation does not work on its own. It must be and always is connected to a multiplicity of actors, both made present and absent. As was shown, the tourists and the people working with or living at the destination are not the only tourist destination actors. Also discourses, artefacts, technologies and many other entities are necessary actors and components in extending, consolidating and reproducing a destination network in space and in time. If the messages or images of tourist representations are not related to and ordered together with an army of heterogeneous actors, then it will not move, it will not work as it will not create relations and effects. It is from this insight on the inclusive, heterogeneous and enacted character of the tourist destination construct that human actors in tourism and its research may hopefully benefit.

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In addition to the above sources, I draw from a large amount of collected tourism material from Zakopane as well as ads, commercials and in-flight magazines, of brochures from various hotels, hostels and other local tourism services and events. Also, I have made use of various reports and working papers from the city council and its units of culture, tourism and sports as well as articles from the local newspapers of the *Tygodnik Podhalański* (Podhale weekly) and the *Kurier Tatrzański* (Tatra Courier).

The quotes in this thesis are all taken from interview transcriptions conducted in Zakopane by either myself or my two research assistants referring to an interview guide worked out together with me. In writing out and applying the transcriptions into this text, I was inspired by de Laet and Mol (2000) in which they write: 'Since we are not engaged in rhetorical analysis, we thought it justified to leave out the repetitions, pauses, and interjections that are characteristic for speech; in view of readability we have, here and there, abridged the words of our spokespartners and streamlined them into "writing" language' (Ibid.:255).

Summary

This thesis explores the tourist destination as a *relational, heterogeneous and socio-material actor-network*. It is argued that the destination may be seen as a construct taking and making place in the simultaneous workings of *purification* and heterogeneous *ordering*. In this process, a multiplicity of human and non-human actors are engaged, either working to support and strengthen or to challenge and negotiate the destination network. Apart from describing the ongoing destination assembling and its effects, the thesis also shows how the destination is enacted as *multiple* (Mol 2002). In applying a radical ontology to the field - or rather network – of study, the destination is seen as enacted, as constructed by both absences and presences, muting and excluding some practices, voices and knowledges rather than others. Through a number of destination descriptions informed by fieldwork conducted in the mountain town and tourist destination of Zakopane located in the Tatra Mountains of Southern Poland, The thesis describes how this work of constructing and ordering the destination is done through a variety of practices, discourses, artefacts and technologies.

The thesis begins with a presentation in chapter 2 of ways in which the tourist destination has commonly been studied within tourism research. It is argued that these approaches are grounded in an understanding of the destination either as a product in itself or a container of other such products *or* as a socio-culturally constructed landscape, a backdrop for human interaction. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is subsequently introduced as a way to transcend these understandings through its relational and symmetrical ontology in which both humans and non-humans are accorded the capacity of acting upon the world. It is shown how ANT does not see the destination, or characteristics commonly associated to it such as cultural conflict, as a priori categories of analysis or as something inherent to the destination. Rather, the differences or identities traced at the destination are seen as *effects* produced in and by the workings of the destination actor-network.

In chapter 3, the methodological consequences of this relational approach are further unfolded as it is demonstrated how it affects the understanding of the field of study as well as the creation of knowledge. This is illustrated through a local newspaper article on my research in which different entities are assembled, hence constructing the field as one to be studied and one to be known. It is argued that our way of studying, knowing and hence enacting the world takes place through processes and performances of intermediary arrangements through the assemblage of methods (Law 2004). Drawing from Haraway (1991), it is argued that what emerges through these intermediary arrangements is *partial knowledge*, knowledge which is not, and never can be, coherent. Understanding things as both relational and heterogeneous means accepting how things are never fully coherent. However, it is not in spite of this incoherence, but rather *because* of it, that entities are held together and are able to work. It is argued that a way to include this ontology into the research work is through the *allegory* (Law 2000), as this does not imply a one-on-one relationship between a neatly delimited object 'out there' and its description.

The present study of the destination is in itself a performance and an intermediary arrangement. Also, it is one which is connected to and (hopefully) challenges its research context, its hinterland. This hinterland is enacted in chapter 4 through yet another method assemblage where different fields of research relating to the tourist destination are critically addressed, namely *tourism research*, *cultural tourism research*, *destination branding* and *intercultural communication in tourism*. I argue first that tourism research is not to be seen as a two divided fields of business and socio-culture. Rather, it is a fractionally coherent network (Law 2000) in which highly diverse knowledges and ways of knowing engage in a collective and socio-material assembling of tourism research and of its objects of study. Moving on, I argue that the study of culture within tourism often implies the understanding of culture as difference and potentially leading to conflict. As opposed to seeing these as inherent to tourism and to the destination, I propose seeing them as effects produced in and through the workings of the destination. Hence, culture becomes not something which *is*, but something which is done and which acts and works at the destination. A similar approach is proposed in addressing the third part of the 'hinterland', namely destination branding. I argue that place branding is based on an attempt to spatially demarcate and freeze specific qualities and identities. As an alternative, I suggest that place should be seen as a constantly created, negotiated and contested *turf* (Modan 2006) and the identities connected to them as constantly created through process of ordering. Hence, the identity of place appears not as a fix point of departure but as an ongoing, performative and negotiated part of the process of constructing destination. A last point is raised against the study of intercultural communication in tourism in which I ask how difference in culture, as opposed to e.g. social or economic inequality, came to be identified as a basis to address cultural communication in tourism. Similarly to the understanding elaborated in the previous sections, I argue that the differences identified within the study of tourism cultures and place must be addressed not as a starting point but as an effect of the workings of the destination actor-network.

Based on this introduction to the relational and socio-material approach to the destination and of the hinterland, which it seeks to challenge, I move on to the destination analysis in the chapters 5 to 9. Well-known themes in tourism research such as identity, place, difference and authenticity are addressed. However and contrary to seeing these notions as a priori essences or as springing from cultural incompatibility between destination stakeholders (hosts and tourists, residents and tourist developers), differences are here perceived as *effects* or outcomes of the destination workings.

This is first discussed in chapter 5, in which differences are seen as outcomes of the work continuously performed in and through the destination network. In this perspective, differences and conflicts are not immutable or natural substances, but rather appear as strategic tools for constructing and structuring the destination and as actors in their own, productive rights. In the analysis I first show how difference is appointed by many informants at the destination in terms of difference in culture (the business man vs. the village) or in agency (tourism development vs. preservation). Secondly, I show how difference is constructed and deployed as a strategic tool. This is done by designating Górale, the local Highland ethnic population and identity, as decisive in creating and identified a difference. Hence, this in many ways emblematic ethnic

group related to Zakopane is both seen as creating difference, but is also used as a way to identify the destination as something *different*.

In chapter 6, it is argued that *place* is another result or effect of the workings of the destination actor-network. Opposing the understanding of space as a container or backdrop for human or social activity to that of relational place, it is discussed how the destination is socio-materially constructed by a multiplicity of actors. Hence, the destination is neither fully hegemonic, nor purely free. Rather, it is constantly produced and contested by and through many actors, some stronger and more visible than others. This is exemplified through the modest example of graffiti on a fence showing how the destination (at least potentially) may be enacted in many different versions.

This idea of multiple enactment is elaborated in chapter 7 in which the *oscypek*, a smoked sheep cheese is introduced as a somehow unusual and unexpected destination actor. The cheese is followed as it travels from the shepherd's hut on the mountain pastures on to the busy Krupówki Street in Zakopane, to traditional farmhouses, laboratories and offices of government or EU officials or even further to international food fairs. Along this journey, the cheese is connected to new practices, new sets of requirements and regulations, is told through new stories and asked a set of shifting questions: 'is it safe', 'is it authentic', 'is it local' etc.? All these new connections, it is argued, enacts different cheeses. They are produced, controlled and priced differently, are made of different ingredients and connected to different people, practices and places. Through this description of the *oscypek*, the chapter shows how objects and the discourses and practices connected to them are part of enacting the tourist destination. Hence, objects are also actors in the destination network.

This idea of objects that act is also addressed in chapter 8 which addresses the emblematic Górale houses and the land on which they are built. By showing how houses and land are accorded with a major role in assigning and understanding Górale identity, it is firstly argued that tourism development is not entirely grasped if solely focusing on its economic or business aspects. However, by introducing the hostel and connected actors and practices as a new way of *doing house* at the destination, it is also shown that the position and role of the house and the land are not strictly cultural, nor purely economic, but rather strategic, flexible and negotiable. Hence land, articulated as 'not for sale' by many informants, is also available to tourism development. However, as shown in the last part of the chapter, some networks do stay cut (Strathern 1996) in regards to the house and land, some objects, practices and people remain absent or unreachable. All in all, the chapter challenges the common understanding of entrepreneurial tourism agency in displaying how house and land are active partakers in opening possibilities, and creating boundaries for actions, spaces, objects and people at the destination.

In the last analytical chapter 9 the notions of difference, place, objects and agency advanced in the above chapters are reintroduced in asking what it is that acts, works and defines the destination by creating differences – or presences. This is done by focusing on the notion and identity of Górale and its role at the

tourist destination. Like the first analytical chapter on difference, this chapter addresses Górale not as a stable identity or group, but as a relational effect. I demonstrate how ways of doing Górale are negotiated through a variety of objects, practices and connections in the specific setting of the Górale restaurant. Although informants oppose the restaurant to another, the 'place of culture' enacted purely cultural space, I argue once again that economy and culture are not separable in any of those two places. Rather, they engage along with many other heterogeneous actors in strategically appointing and rejecting who and what are authentic or not. The notions of identity and authenticity are rejected as stable entities 'out there', as they are instead perceived as strategic tools to enrol and define what is in and what is out, what is difference and what is sameness.

In the final chapter 10, I discuss the insights which emerge from a relational and socio-material approach to the study of the destination. The insights stemming from this approach were divided into two: specific insight on the destination of Zakopane and general insight into how a tourist destination may be studied and understood. First, the material from Zakopane showed how Górale and notions of difference, identity and authenticity worked to construct and negotiate the destination. However, it also showed that these notions are not pure and do not work alone, but must constantly connect to other actors. Hence, the destination was constructed and enacted through a continual process of purification and heterogeneous ordering. This draws the attention to a general understanding of the heterogeneous, relational and socio-material character of the destination construct. In this construct, it is not only human actors or organisations that act. Neither is it purely economical logics or structures. In order to work, the destination must necessarily connect to various actors. Although not everything can be made present at the destination, its construct always requires a fractional coherence between multiple actors. I end the thesis by arguing that although tourism marketing, management and other destination actors may seek to streamline the tourist destination image, its construct is always based on the heterogenic practices of its socio-material actors. It is in and through the work of the actors that the destination is constructed and enacted.

Dansk resumé

At konstruere turistdestinationen. En socio-materiel beskrivelse

Denne afhandling undersøger turistdestinationen som et relationelt, heterogent og socio-materielt aktør-netværk. Der argumenteres for, at destinationen finder (og skaber) sted i en simultan proces af purificering og heterogen ordning. I denne proces indrulleres en flerhed af humane og nonhumane aktører. Gennem forskellige former for praksisser, er disse aktører med til at skabe destinationen - enten ved at understøtte og styrke dets netværk eller ved at udfordre og forhandle det. Udover en beskrivelse af den fortløbende montering af destinationen og af dets effekter, viser denne afhandling også, hvorledes den multiple destination opføres ('enactes', Mol 2002). Ved at anvende en radikal ontologi på feltet – eller snarere netværket, ses destinationen som konstrueret gennem både mønstre af fravær og tilstedeværelse, der inkluderer eller ekskludere nogle praksisser, stemmer og former for viden frem for andre. Gennem en række beskrivelser fra et feltarbejde udført i Zakopane, en polsk turistdestination beliggende i Tatra-bjergene i det sydlige Polen, beskriver afhandlingen, hvorledes destinationen ordnes og konstrueres gennem en flerhed af aktører, praksisser, diskurser, genstande og teknologier.

Afhandlingens kapitel 2 starter med en præsentation af de tilgange, hvormed turistdestinationen traditionelt er blevet beskrevet indenfor turismeforskningen. Jeg viser, at disse tilgange er forankret i en forståelse af destinationen som et produkt eller en ramme for andre lignende turistprodukter *eller* et sociokulturelt konstrueret landskab, en kulisse for menneskelig aktivitet. På den baggrund introduceres Aktør-Netværksteori (ANT) som et greb hvormed disse forståelser kan transcenderes, idet både humane og nonhumane aktører tildeles en handlingskapacitet i dets radikale ontologi. Ofte associeres destinationen med problematikker omkring kulturel konflikt, der benyttes som en a priori analysekategori eller som naturligt knyttet til destinationen. I et ANT-perspektiv betragtes de forskelligheder eller identiteter, der spores på destinationen, snarere som en effekt produceret i og igennem det arbejde, der udføres igennem turistdestinationens aktør-netværk.

I kapitel 3 udfoldes de metodologiske konsekvenser af afhandlingens relationelle tilgang. Det demonstreres, hvordan tilgangen påvirker synet på såvel studiefeltet som forståelsen af, hvorledes viden skabes. Dette illustreres igennem en interviewartikel omkring mine forskningsaktiviteter i den lokale avis. Her ses det, hvorledes forskellige entiteter knyttes sammen, hvorved der skabes et felt, der både kan studeres og gøres til viden. Der argumenteres for, at vores måder at studere verden på, er både videns- og verdensproducerende og at denne produktivitet samtidig er performativ. Denne uadskillelige proces mellem viden og verden, objekt og subjekt, produktion og performance skabes og knyttes sammen gennem intermediære ordninger (intermediary arrangements) og gennem metodemontage (method assemblage, Law 2004). Haraways ide om partiel viden (1991) benyttes til at beskrive, hvad der opstår fra disse intermediære ordninger. Dette er viden, der ikke er, og aldrig kan blive, kohærent. At forstå ting som både relationelle og heterogene betyder en accept af, at ting og vores beskrivelser af disse, aldrig hænger fuldstændigt sammen.

Det er imidlertid ikke på trods af, men netop på grund af denne inkohærens, at entiteter holdes sammen. Der argumenteres for, at en måde at medtænke denne ontologi i forskningsarbejdet på, er gennem *allegorien* (Law 2000), idet denne ikke forudsætter et fuldt ud korresponderende forhold mellem et nydeligt afgrænset objekt og dets beskrivelse.

Nærværende studie af turistdestinationen er i sig selv en performance og en intermedieret ordning. Desuden knytter det sig til en bestemt forskningskontekst, til et forskningsmæssigt bagland, som den også forsøger at udfordre. Dette bagland opridses i kapitel 4 gennem endnu en metodemontage, hvor forskellige turismerelaterede forskningsfelter kritisk adresseres. Disse er *turismeforskningen*, *kulturel turismeforskning*, *destinationsbranding* og *interkulturel kommunikation* i turismen. Først argumenterer jeg for, at turismeforskning ikke bør betragtes som opsplittet mellem en erhvervsorienteret og et sociokulturelt orienteret forskningsfelt. Snarere bør det ses som et *fraktionelt kohærent netværk* (fractionally coherent network, Law 2000) hvori stærkt forskellige vidensformer og måder at vide på i en kollektiv, sociomateriel sammenknytning af turismeforskningen og dets studieobjekt. Dernæst argumenterer jeg for, at studiet af kultur i turismeforskningen ofte implicerer en forståelse af kultur som forskelle og som potentielt sammenstødende. I modsætning til at anvende dette konfliktuerende kulturbegreb som naturligt sammenhørende med turisme og turistdestinationen foreslår jeg at betragte kultur som en effekt produceret i og gennem destinationens gøren. Herved bliver kultur ikke noget som *er*, men noget, som *gøres*, noget som handler og som derigennem indvirker på destinationen. En lignende tilgang foreslås i relation til en tredje del af baglandet, nemlig destinationsbranding. Der argumenteres for, at place branding er baseret på et forsøg på rumligt at afgrænse et sted og dernæst på at fastfryse stedets særlige kvaliteter og identitet. I stedet foreslår jeg, at sted skal betragtes som en bane (*turf*, Modan 2006), der konstant kridtes af, forhandles og bestrides. På samme måde må identiteter, der betragtes som stedsforbundne betragtes som vedvarende skabte gennem en række af ordningsprocesser. Herved forekommer stedsidentiteter ikke som faste udgangspunkter, men som en vedvarende, foranderlig og performativ del af destinationskonstruktionen. På samme måde som på de ovenstående felter, kritiseres forskningsfeltet omkring interkulturel kommunikation i turisme for at tage udgangspunkt i og forudsætte kulturelle forskelle. Der argumenteres for, at disse forskelle bør betragtes ikke som et grundlag for, men som en *effekt* af destinationen.

På baggrund af denne introduktion af den relationelle og socio-materielle tilgang til studiet af destinationen og til det bagland, som afhandlingen søger at udfordre, følger nu analyserne af den konkrete destination i kapitel 5 til 9. Kapitel 5 starter med en nærmere undersøgelse af de forskelle, der udpeges på turistdestinationen. I analysen betragtes disse som et resultat af det løbende arbejde, der performes i og gennem destinationsnetværket. I dette perspektiv ses forskelle og konflikter ikke som uforanderlige eller naturgivne essenser. Snarere fremstår de som strategiske redskaber, der anvendes til at konstruere og strukturere destinationen og hermed som aktører. I analysen viser jeg først hvorledes forskelle udpeges af mange informanter på destinationen som forskelle i *kultur* (forretningsmanden overfor landsbyen) eller i *handling* (turismeudvikling overfor bevaring). Dernæst viser jeg, hvorledes forskelle konstrueres og anvendes som strategisk værktøj. Dette sker gennem en udpegnings af gørale, den lokale etniske befolkning

og identitet, som en afgørende forskelsmarkør. Dermed bliver denne på mange måder emblematiske etniske gruppe både set som forskelsskabende, men også som noget, hvormed destinationen kan identificeres som *anderledes*.

I kapitel 6 introduceres *sted* som en anden effekt af det arbejde, der sker i og gennem destinationens aktør-netværk. En forståelse af rum som en container eller kulisse for social aktivitet udfordres af en forståelse af det relationelle sted. Der argumenteres for, at destinationen som socio-materielt sted konstrueres gennem en flerhed af aktører. Hermed er destinationen hverken et fuldstændigt hegemonisk eller helt frit sted. Snarere skal det ses som konstant produceret og omstridt af og igennem en række aktører, hvor nogle virker stærkere og mere synlige end andre. Dette eksemplificeres ved hjælp af en kridtgraffiti på et plankeværk, der viser, at destinationen (i hvert fald potentielt) kan gøres og skabes i mange forskellige versioner.

Ideen om multipel gøren (enactment) uddybes i kapitel 7. Her introduceres oscypek, en røget fåreost som en uventet og usædvanlig destinationsaktør. Osten følges på sin rejse fra fårehyrdens sæterhytte ned til den travle gågade Krupówki i Zakopane og videre til traditionelle gårdbrug, laboratorier og funktionærkontorer i Warszawa og EU for til sidst at slutte sporet på en international fødevaremesse. Undervejs på rejsen forbindes osten med nye former for praksis samt nye krav og bestemmelser. Osten fortælles på nye måder og bliver mødt med en række af skiftende spørgsmål: 'er den sikker', 'er den autentisk', 'er den lokal', osv. Alle disse nye forbindelse opfører en række forskellige oste, der produceres, kontrolleres og prissættes forskelligt, der består af forskellige ingredienser og er forbundet med forskellige andre mennesker, praksisser og steder. Gennem beskrivelsen af oscypek påvises det i kapitlet hvorledes genstande og dertil knyttede praksisser og diskurser også tager del i opførelsen af turistdestinationen og dermed også, at genstande også handler i dets netværk.

Denne forestilling om den handlende genstand følges op i kapitel 8, der omhandler det emblematiske górale hus og den jord, hvorpå det er bygget og knyttet. Først vises det, hvorledes huset og jorden tillægges en betydningsfuld rolle i tildelingen og forståelsen af góraleidentitet. Dette viser, at turismeudvikling ikke udelukkende kan forstås ved at fokusere på dets økonomiske aspekter eller erhvervsrettede sider. Dernæst introduceres vandrehjemmet (hostel) og en række dertil knyttede aktører og praksisser som en ny måde at *gøre hus* på destinationen. Dette viser, at husets og jordens position ikke kun er baseret på kulturelle og sociale normer og fuldstændig adskilt fra det økonomiske, men snarere er strategiske, fleksible og dynamiske. Jorden, der af mange informanter betegnes som 'ikke til salg' viser sig således også at være tilgængelig for turismeudvikling. På trods af denne fleksible position vises det i den sidste del af kapitlet også, at visse dele af netværk dog forbliver afskårne (*cut*, Strathern 1996) og visse objekter, praksisser og mennesker fraværende eller utilgængelige. Alt i alt udfordrer kapitlet den gængse forståelse af turistentreprenøren ved at vise huset og jorden som aktive deltagere i skabelsen af muligheder og oprettelsen af grænser for destinationsaktørernes handlinger, rum og genstande.

I det sidste analytiske kapitel 9 genintroduceres begreberne omkring forskelle, sted, genstande og handling fra de foregående kapitler i en nærmere undersøgelse af, hvad der gennem forskels- og fraværsskabelse handler og indvirker på destinationen. Dette gøres ved at fokusere på górale som begreb og identitet og på dets rolle på destinationen. Som i det første analytiske kapitel omkring forskelle betragtes górale ikke som en stabil identitet eller gruppe, men som en relationel effekt. Ved at bruge góralerestauranten som eksempel, påviser jeg, hvordan 'rigtige' måder at gøre górale udpeges og forhandles gennem en flerhed af genstande, praksisser og forbindelser. På trods af, at dette sted af informanter kontrasteres til andre mere 'kulturelle' steder ('places of culture') uden tilsyneladende økonomiske forbindelse, argumenterer jeg endnu engang for, at økonomi og kultur heller ikke dér skarpt adskilles, men snarere kobles sammen begge steder gennem en række heterogene aktører. I forhold til góralebegrebet virker disse til strategisk at udpege og anviser af, hvem og hvad, der anses som autentiske eller ej. Hermed afvises forestillingen om identitet og autenticitet som stabile enheder 'derude', som snarere som strategiske redskaber.

I det sidste kapitel 10 diskuterer jeg de indsigter, der er opstået i kølvandet på en relationel og socio-materiel tilgang til destinationen. Disse indsigter kan opdeles i to: som enten specifikke for den konkrete destination Zakopane og som generelle for, hvorledes turistdestinationer kan studeres og forstås. I den første henseende viser materialet fra Zakopane, hvorledes górale og mere generelt begreberne forskelle, identitet og autenticitet kan anvendes som værktøjer til at konstruere og forhandle destinationen. Det viser også, at disse begreber ikke er rene og ikke kan virke alene, men må forbindes til andre aktører for at skabe virkning. Destinationen konstrueres hermed gennem en kontinuerlig og samtidig proces af purifikation og heterogen ordning. Dette bekræfter og forstærker den generelle indsigte omkring destinationens relationelle, heterogene og socio-materielle karakter. I destinationens konstruktion er det ikke kun humane aktører eller økonomiske strukturer, der 'bygger'. På trods af, at ikke alt kan gøres synligt eller tilstedeværende, kræver dets konstruktion altid en fraktionel kohærens mellem multiple aktører. Til slut argumenterer jeg for denne multiplicitets betydning. På trods af, at markedsføringsfolk, managers og andre destinationsaktører ofte søger at strømline destinationens image, forudsætter destinationens opføring heterogene aktører og praksisser, idet det kun er i og igennem denne heterogenitet, at destinationen kan konstrueres og gøres.