Tours, trade, and temples

Hindu pilgrimage in the age of global tourism

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Abstract

Based on ethnographic research across various locations in Northern India between 2012–5, this dissertation investigates how Hindu pilgrimage has adapted to the rise of global tourism through four case studies. On a theoretical level it addresses the question of how to understand the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. Earlier studies have tended to either contrast or conflate pilgrimage and tourism, often based on a typological approach that categorizes travellers as either tourists, pilgrims or somewhere in between. In the thesis introduction I provide an alternative by developing a theoretical approach that diverges from the dominant coordinates in earlier discussions.

My theoretical approach comprises two main steps. First, I conceptualize pilgrimage and tourism as two identifiable domains of socio-cultural activities that historically have been sustained by different institutions and organizations, but that engage in an ongoing interplay. The interplay model allows us to analyze the ways in which actors, agencies and practices tied to each of these domains intersect and tie into one another. The dissertation shows how this interplay produces new combinations and configurations that are related to the removal of earlier religious patterns, but also generate new arrangements facilitating religiosity. Second, I focus on the hitherto largely overlooked role of mediators, intermediary agencies and formations that operate between pilgrims and the places they visit, including tourist guides, pilgrimage priests, guided tours, guidebooks, tourism departments, travel agencies, circuits, itineraries and package tours. The four articles of the dissertation thus target the modus operandi of Hindu pilgrimage in the age of global tourism, and the mediating structures that pilgrims and other travellers become entangled in and draw on when they travel to places of pilgrimage. In this way, the dissertation provides a fresh angle to the study of pilgrimage and tourism, shedding new light on contemporary Hinduism and Hindu pilgrimage and provides a cross-cultural framework for understanding the impact of modern tourism on pilgrimage traditions around the globe.

The first article [published in Tourist Studies] investigates guided tours in Haridwar (Kankhal) and Rishikesh. Analyzing audio-recordings of the guide narratives, I find that the tours are structured according to a religio-commercial agenda that coordinates
commercial and religious interests. The guides invoke a vast array of concepts and images from the reservoir of Hindu narratives and practices to promote the use and purchase of religious objects sold in shops that collaborate with the guides and give them a share of the profit. The article suggests that tourist guides and their guided tours have become integral parts of Hindu pilgrimage and its operation in the age of global tourism.

In the second article [published in *Modern Asian Studies*] I explore the adaptive strategies adopted by pilgrimage priests (*pandas*) in Vrindavan in relation to changes ushered by tourism. Changing travel patterns have forced *pandas* to modify their services by adopting the role of the guide and by offering guided tours. They also collaborate with travel agencies or open their own travel agencies that combine priestly and tourist services. In order to secure an income, *pandas* modify familiar mythological narratives and use various rhetorical devices trying to stimulate pilgrims to give donations (*dan*) out of which the *pandas* get a share. While the forces of global tourism have helped diminish the traditional exchange system between *panda* and pilgrim, I argue that the commercial concerns as such do not represent a new development but resonate with the history of Hindu pilgrimage and the *pandas*' trade.

In the third article [forthcoming in *Journal of Contemporary Religion*], I turn to the Himalayan Char Dham pilgrimage route. I argue that the growth of Char Dham was predicated on the involvement of the public tourist boards and tourist bureaucrats who saw in Char Dham a readymade (religious) concept to be turned into a tourism circuit. A content analysis of Char Dham guidebooks is used to challenge the hypothesis that tourism development will result in a rebranding of pilgrimages that downplay religious dimensions and affairs. The inclusion of tourist activities and sites in the promotion of Char Dham is not replacing religious communication, but rather complementing it, or changing it by suggesting a correspondence between natural beauty and religious significance. Char Dham guidebooks still report miracles and provide instructions in ritual matters, while framing is as a picturesque pilgrimage, indicating a clear departure from pre-modern conceptions of nature.

The fourth article [forthcoming in *Numen*] investigates the role of travel agencies in promoting pilgrimage tours in Delhi, Vrindavan and Haridwar. Surveying travel brochures I find that the market privileges circuits and destinations where pilgrimage and additional tourist resources cluster together, suggesting a dynamic relationship between India's sacred geography and a broader tourist geography. Non-religious
tourist attractions and services do not compete with pilgrimage sites, instead the combined resources of pilgrimage and other tourism sites work to mutual benefit in popular itineraries. For most participants, these day tours are incorporated into larger journeys that are framed both with and without reference to religious purposes and pilgrimage. By collating these discoveries with findings from earlier studies I develop an analysis of overarching developments and implications in what I call pilgrimage-related travel. Crucially, visits to pilgrimage sites are increasingly framed as darshan tours reflecting how increased scheduling, with swift temple visits, privileges darshan and donations as the principle religious act.

Looking at the four articles collectively, I summarize my core findings in three propositions that are unfolded in the introduction:

Proposition A: Movement and money condition the mediation of religion at places of pilgrimage.

Proposition B: Tourism has not been a secularizing force, but rather brought changes in and a repositioning of the religious aspects of Hindu pilgrimage.

Proposition C: The tourist industry and tourist boards are important co-creators of the current Hindu pilgrimage culture and the contemporary expression of India's sacred geography.
List of publications


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Introduction

The dissertation you are now reading is made up of four articles:

1. "Retailing religion: Guided tours and guide narratives in Hindu Pilgrimage".

2. "Krishna's curse in the age of global tourism: Hindu pilgrimage priests and their trade".

3. "Pilgrimage expansion through tourism in contemporary India: The development and promotion of a Hindu pilgrimage circuit".

4. "Repackaging India's sacred geography: Travel agencies and pilgrimage-related travel".

As per the guidelines for article-based dissertations,¹ the task of this introduction is to provide a synthesis of the four articles to demonstrate how they connect and work together as a whole.² To do this I provide a discussion of theory, methodology, research ethics, and the main research findings. The first part is devoted to the overarching theoretical issue that ties the four articles together, namely the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. A discussion of different theoretical positions is used as a backdrop to present my own analytical contribution for understanding the pilgrimage-tourism nexus that diverges from the dominant coordinates in earlier discussions.

My theoretical approach comprises two main steps. First I propose what I call the interplay model that provides an alternative to the recurrent view that pilgrimage and tourism be treated as either opposite or indistinguishable phenomena. I suggest we conceptualize pilgrimage and tourism as two identifiable domains of socio-cultural activities that historically have been sustained by different institutions and organizations, but that engage in an ongoing interplay. This first step of the argument seeks to overcome the limitations that arise from focusing on the question of who is a tourist and who is a pilgrim, or rehashing the proposition that a "tourist is half a pilgrim, if the pilgrim is half a tourist" (Turner and Turner 1978: 20). Second, my approach focuses on the hitherto largely overlooked role of mediators, intermediary

² In other words, I will not present a literature review of earlier studies dealing with aspects of Hindu pilgrimage and tourism in this introduction. I do, however, engage this literature in the four articles.
agencies and formations that operate between pilgrims and the places they visit, including tourist guides, pilgrimage priests, guided tours, guidebooks, tourism departments, travel agencies, circuits, itineraries and package tours. Thus, the pilgrims themselves are not the key targets of analysis in my dissertation. Instead the four papers target the modus operandi of Hindu pilgrimage and the mediating structures that pilgrims become entangled in and draw on when they travel to places of pilgrimage. In this way, the dissertation provides a fresh angle to the study of pilgrimage and tourism, shedding new light on contemporary Hinduism and Hindu pilgrimage and provides a cross-cultural framework for understanding the impact of modern tourism on pilgrimage traditions around the globe.

In the subsequent section, titled "Thesis ontogenesis", I take a step back to review the development of the project as a whole and the fieldwork process revealing the often unplanned and occasionally serendipitous turn of events and changes of direction that are inevitable parts of the research process. Here I discuss questions of methodology and research ethics that emerged as the dissertation evolved and matured. While my presentation of the methodology will begin to present the four articles, I save a more thorough disclosure of the research results for the subsequent section: "Main findings". In it I will present the core findings of the dissertation in the form of three propositions as a way to present the four articles rather than providing straightforward summaries that inevitably would amount to an exercise in repetition.

As a whole, the articles operate on two levels. On one level they are directed at rather specific empirical questions regarding (1) tourist guides in Haridwar and Rishikesh, (2) pilgrimage priests and their trade in Vrindavan, (3) the Char Dham pilgrimage route in the Himalayas, and (4) day tours to pilgrimage sites organized by travel agencies. On a more general level they all address the pilgrimage-tourism debate and the larger issue of how pilgrimage is changing in relation to tourism. It is from this latter level that I will develop a synthesis of the articles to show how Hindu pilgrimage has been affected by and adapted to the growth of global tourism.

3 For the purpose of this text I use the term 'pilgrim' in an inclusive manner to denote Hindu visitors at sites of pilgrimage that take part in the worship of Hindu deities. In this perspective an Indian pilgrim is also a domestic tourist.
The pilgrimage and tourism debate

Underlying affinities and the "secular pilgrimage" paradigm

The relationship between pilgrimage and tourism has been considered in scattered publications for a long time, but crystalized more clearly as a separate topic for discussion from the early 1980s onwards. In an interdisciplinary conference on *Pilgrimage: The Human Quest* in 1981, tourism became a hot topic in relation to definitions of pilgrimage as noted in a report: "Pilgrims can behave as tourists, and tourists as pilgrims; pilgrimage places can be sites of tourism, and tourist centres visited reverentially" (Morinis 1981: 282). A second report from the conference published in one of the leading journals in the field, *Annals of Tourism Research* (Morinis 1983), raised the question of whether tourism and pilgrimage can be distinguished and charts two positions: the convergence perspective (represented by Valene Smith), and divergence perspective (represented by Erik Cohen). Many of the conference papers first surfaced in 1992 in a volume edited by anthropologist Alan Morinis titled *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*. These debates also inspired a special edition on the topic in *Annals of Tourism Research* the same year.

In the former book publication, Morinis defines pilgrimage as "a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal" (1992b: 4). The open-ended definition of pilgrimage as a quest or "a sacred journey" (where sacred often remains a fuzzy referent) is recurrent in the literature, and has important implications for how the pilgrimage-tourism relationship is understood. Given the open definition, pilgrimage is not just found within the established religions, but also when people travel to the tombs of political leaders such as Lenin, or visit Disneyland, seaside paradises and "other touristic 'Meccas'" (1992b: 3-4). The argument implied by Morinis is that pilgrimage traditions – that is pilgrimages within organized religion (e.g. Hindu, Christian and Islamic pilgrimage) – and tourism share certain underlying affinities, amounting to what we somewhat frivolously might call a Sheldrakian analysis of tourism and religion.

In David Lodge's novel *Paradise News* (1991) the protagonist meets the fictitious anthropologist Roger Sheldrake who has published a book on tourism. Sheldrake explains:
The thesis of my book is that sightseeing is a substitute for religious ritual. The sightseeing tour as secular pilgrimage. Accumulation of grace by visiting the shrines of high culture. Souvenirs as relics. Guidebooks as devotional aids. You get the picture. (1991: 61)

It is not unlikely that the Sheldrake character was inspired by two publications by key theorists of tourism in the 1970s, Dean MacCannel (1999 [1976]) and Nelson Graburn (1977). MacCannel suggested that "tourist attractions are precisely analogous to the religious symbolism of primitive peoples" (1999: 2) whereas sightseeing "is a kind of collective striving for transcendence of the modern totality" (1999: 13). In Graburn's analysis (1977: 21), tourism is a ritualized break from routine life and stands for the nonordinary/voluntary away-from-home sacred state, in contrast to the profane ordinary/compulsory work state spent at home. The altered state that people seek through tourism is thus the same as that of pilgrimages in traditional societies (1977: 24). As argued by Michael Stausberg (2011: 25–7), these theories are flawed to the extent that they rely on the assumption that religion would disappear in modern societies (and tourism take its place), and due to their somewhat simplistic understanding of tourism: tourism has diversified into a broad range of experiences and types while no longer being non-ordinary but rather a routine affair for many. Moreover, modern means of transportation has made "sacred journeys" in the context of pilgrimage traditions increasingly casual and regular (Reader 2014: 137–9). But more importantly here, these approaches are not interested in religion or pilgrimage traditions as such, except as referents of comparison and as cultural forms being replaced in modernity. The work of Victor Turner, however, is both related to these theorists and interested in pilgrimage traditions.

In "The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal" (1973: 191–2), Turner categorically states that pilgrimages are "liminal phenomena" where social relations exhibit the quality of communitas. In relation to modern means of transportation and mass media, Turner briefly mentions that "many visitors to shrines should perhaps be considered as tourists rather than pilgrims per se" (1973: 196). In the 1978 Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture, however, Victor and Edith Turner argue that:

[a] tourist is half a pilgrim, if the pilgrim is half a tourist. Even when people bury themselves in anonymous crowds on beaches, they are seeking an almost sacred, often symbolic mode of communitas, generally unavailable to them in the structured life of the office, the shop floor, or the mine (1978: 20).
Here, in the first line of the citation, we find what is probably the most popular quote in the study of pilgrimage and tourism. The Turnerian legacy has had two important consequences for the study of pilgrimage and tourism.

This quote, along side the theoretical impulses for MacCannel and Graburn, has been used by scholars to analyze travel phenomena outside the realm of organized religion as a form of pilgrimage (e.g. Reader 1993: 6–7; Badone 2004; Badone and Roseman 2004b: 5–8). At the same time scholars have used a second entry point into the same field by analyzing the use of the terms and concepts of 'pilgrimage' and 'pilgrims' in popular culture, literature and the media to frame or describe events and travels taking place outside organized religion (Reader and Walter 1993). Together, these scholarly endeavors have led to an expansion of pilgrimage as a scholarly category, best exemplified by the constellation "secular pilgrimage". This expansion is typically based on the open definition of pilgrimage as a sacred or special journey. Morinis, we saw above, suggests that visits to iconic national and political sites, beach resorts and Disneyland can be considered pilgrimage. In an article on "Religious and secular pilgrimage", Justine Digance (2006: 37) defines pilgrimage as "undertaking a journey that is redolent with meaning". The popularity of this approach – the secular pilgrimage paradigm – is reflected in a pilgrimage encyclopedia from 2002 titled Pilgrimage: From the Ganges to Graceland (Davidson and Gitlitz) and an anthology titled Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred (Margry 2008). Pilgrimage traditions – or, to follow this new approach, "religious pilgrimage traditions" – are only treated as one kind of pilgrimage in this new inclusive paradigm.

As I see it, this expansion of 'pilgrimage' as a scholarly category has mainly benefited the study of travel phenomena outside organized religion. Thus travel in secular settings are analyzed and studied with reference to "religious pilgrimage traditions" or what "religious pilgrimages/pilgrims" are imagined to be like, and not the other way around. Given that a wider range of phenomena are included under the umbrella of 'pilgrimage', one can conclude that pilgrimages are diverse and multidimensional (Reader 1993: 22), or that religious pilgrimage traditions are becoming less important as secular pilgrimages offer "new itineraries into the sacred" that "correspond with modernity" (Margry 2008b: 327). This offers us very little in
terms of studying the relationship between Hindu pilgrimage (or any other "religious pilgrimage tradition"\(^4\)) and tourism.\(^5\)

A second important legacy of the Turners is the privileging of the pilgrims themselves or those that travel as the main loci of theorization and conceptualization of pilgrimage and tourism. Turner (1973: 191) is predominantly interested in the "pilgrimage processes", in other words the experiences of and relationships between pilgrims while they are on a pilgrimage. When the Turners are quoted in relation to pilgrimage and tourism, the focus is typically on pilgrims and tourists, i.e. those that travel. By implication then, pilgrimage and tourism is really defined through the pilgrim and the tourist.

**The study of pilgrimage and tourism has mostly been the study of pilgrims and tourists**

Ever since the above-mentioned 1981 conference, the question of relating pilgrimage and tourism has predominantly focused on traveler behavior and motivation. Time and again, the topic of pilgrimage and tourism has been translated to a question of locating 'the tourist' vis-a-vis 'the pilgrim'. Valene Smith's (1992: 1, 14–5) introduction to the 1992 special edition of *Annals of Tourism Research* speaks of investigating the relationships between two *types of travel* that are difficult to distinguish. Over two decades later, Alex Norman and Carol Cussack (2015: 2) write in their introduction to an edited four-volume series on *Religion, Pilgrimage and Tourism* that decades of scholarly work indicates that "no clear distinction can exist between the "two 'types' of travel". Key to this traveler-centric understanding has been a typological approach that tries to categorize travelers according to various criterions and orientations (Cohen 1992; Smith 1992). Ellen Badone and Sharon R. Roseman's influential edited volume *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* (2004) also retains this focus. A recurrent conclusion has been that it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish between pilgrim and tourist, hence it is difficult to make a distinction between pilgrimage and tourism (Timothy and Dallen

\(^4\) Note that I from here on return to the designation "pilgrimage traditions", dropping the qualification "religious", to refer to pilgrimage in the context of organized religions.

\(^5\) With the secular pilgrimage approach scholars in fact help perpetuate the colloquial pilgrim and pilgrimage rhetoric in popular culture (Stausberg 2011: 54), and it is not clear to me how much theoretical insight taking this rhetoric on face value can provide. To give just one example, cricket is habitually compared with religion in India, but this does not mean that the stardom and celebration of Sachin Tendulkar necessarily tell us much about deity worship in Hinduism.
In her essays on the study of pilgrimage and tourism, Noga Collins-Kreiner (2009, 2010), observes a tendency towards dedifferentiation in scholars' analysis of pilgrimage and tourism (2009: 443). At the same time she argues that this dedifferentiation corresponds with a blurring of lines between "traditional pilgrims and tourists", as both of them seek out meaningful sites and people combine tourism and pilgrimage in their trips (2009: 443, 445–6). Here, studies of a wide range and variety of travel practices are brought together in relation to the secular pilgrimage paradigm and studies inspired by MacCannel and Graburn, travel that is connected to New Age ideologies and the spiritual milieu, travel that involves cultural tourists interested in religion as culture, and studies of travel in relation to pilgrimage traditions. While commenting on and to some extent critiquing the focus on distinguishing tourists from pilgrims in research since the 1990s (2010: 156), Collins-Kreiner nevertheless contributes to the perpetuation of the typological approach in her own discussion (2009: 446; 2010: 161).

Some studies bring the issue of traveler types to specific pilgrimage traditions. Luigi Tomasi (2002) represents such an attempt, using the figure of the pilgrim as a prism for understanding the interactions between a pilgrimage tradition and the rise of modern tourism. He traces the history of Christian pilgrimage from the classical medieval pilgrimage to what the modern age turned into "religious tourism" (2002: 13). The rise of the tourist industry and the idea of "free time" that came with industrialization has led the way for travel motivated partly or wholly by religious motives while also being closely or loosely connected to holiday-making (2002: 19). While briefly alluding to the secular pilgrimage paradigm and Sheldrakian assessments (2002: 20), Tomasi concludes that we can no longer distinguish between pilgrimage and tourism since various purposes for travel intermingle and pilgrims are embedded in the tourist industry via travel agencies and hotels (2002: 21). In Tomasi's analysis "religious tourism" stands for a kind of travel that takes place at the intersection of traditional pilgrimage motivated by religious purposes and modern leisure tourism, following Valene Smith's (1992: 4) suggested continuum ranging
from pilgrimage/sacred/pious pilgrim to tourism/secular/secular tourist. In between these two extremes we find religious tourism and the pilgrim-tourist/tourist-pilgrim.⁶

What we do not gain from this approach is an understanding of how various aspects of a pilgrimage tradition, including associated religious practices, have adapted to the rise of modern tourism, and, conversely, how aspects of the tourist industry have tapped into a pilgrimage tradition in order to facilitate "religious tourism" and the modern "pilgrim-tourist". As the editors of Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys pointed out in their conclusion, the effects of modern tourism and new forms of transportation on "traditional pilgrimage" needs further study (Timothy and Olsen 2006c: 276). Some scholars participating in the pilgrimage and tourism debate have noted the role of tourism brokers like tour operators, tourist boards and guides in relation to Jewish pilgrimage (Ioannides and Ioannides 2006: 168), Buddhist pilgrimage in Japan (Reader 2005⁷), Islamic pilgrimage (Timothy and Iverson 2006: 195), Hindu pilgrimage (Rinchede 1992: 59) and Christian pilgrimage tours to Medjugorje (Vuconic 1991: 87–9). Still, few go beyond recognizing this involvement to ask how this changes a pilgrimage tradition. To do so would mean to go beyond the limiting focus on "types of travel", traveler characteristics and motivations.

Rather than trying to map types of travelers for analytical purposes, some have turned to the way in which participants in and organizers of pilgrimage engage such distinctions to further their own ends (Eade 1992; Graburn 2004). This approach is much more promising than etic categorizations, a point I return to below. While Daniel Olsen (2010) is right in pointing out that the construction of pilgrims/tourists as ideal types are problematic insofar as they construct the idea of a pilgrim based on a romanticized image of the pious Christian pilgrim, he is wrong in asserting that the pilgrim-tourist distinction is only relevant in Western settings. As I will show towards the end of this introduction, this very binary construct is also found in debates within Hinduism. Moreover, as pointed out by Stausberg (2011: 54), ideal-typical

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⁶ Geographers have used the term 'religious tourism' to denote any kind of travel "exclusively or strongly motivated for religious reasons" (Rinschede 1992: 52). According to this definition religious tourism points to one of the oldest forms of travel in human history, and pilgrimage is only one type of religious tourism. In tourism studies (Timothy and Dallen 2006b: 6–7), definitions of tourism tend to be similarly broad following the official World Tourism Organizations definition which in turn makes pilgrimage a form of tourism and pilgrims a kind of tourist. For other uses of religious tourism see Stausberg (2011: 13–4).

⁷ Ian Reader (2005) deals with the importance of bus package tours (look up ‘bus package tours’ in his index) organized by travel companies, and is thus one of the exceptions that deal extensively with the impact of a tourist broker in the development of a pilgrimage tradition.
distinctions can be helpful in interpreting reality and describing historical change when applied critically. In any case, as scholars we ought to consider reflexively where the intellectual reflex to separate between pilgrims and tourists comes from in the first place, which I turn to next.

Narratives of decay: Overcoming Christian biases and anti-tourism sentiments

As early as 1983, Bryan Pfaffenberger (59–61) argued that "touristic" behaviors of frivolity at Sri Lankan pilgrimage sites should not be interpreted as tourism, but rather be seen as developments of traditional pilgrimage styles. He argued that visits to places of pilgrimage continued to take place under the sway of religious language (e.g. miracles, faith, darshan) and not the tourism language of recreation and appreciations of natural splendor. While the articles in this dissertation go a long way to show that these languages are increasingly combined in India (especially clear when looking at guidebooks in article 3), I agree with Pfaffenberger that the descriptive language of scholars looking at the effects of tourism on a pilgrimage tradition can give the impression that a tradition has been broken or all continuity is lost and religious dimensions removed. A title like From Pilgrimage to Package Tour (Gladstone 2005) appears to indicate that pilgrimage is not really compatible with modern tourism – that there cannot be such a thing as a pilgrimage package tour. Descriptions of Hindu and Christian pilgrimage traditions similarly speak of a transition from pilgrimage to religious tourism (Shinde 2007; Tomasi 2002).

The assumption that tourism and the tourist industry will do away with pilgrimage has deep roots in a Western discursive universe where pilgrimage and tourism appear as opposites (Stausberg 2011: 19–20). Accordingly pilgrimage is tied to faith, the religious and ascetic, whereas tourism stands for pleasure, the secular and commercial. This powerful conceptual scheme is operative among interest groups and participants of all kinds including both insiders and outsiders, and has spread beyond "the West". It is clearly activated in scholarly accounts that tend to vilify tourism as something that destroys pristine traditions and corrodes the meaningful and spiritual. Studies of pilgrimage and tourism therefore sometimes read as narratives of decay. To only focus on Hinduism, we can read that tourism has transformed Hindu pilgrimage into "mere 'sightseeing tour[s]'" (Shinde 2007: 194), "busloads" of "tourist pilgrims" will have negative effects of the spiritual magnetism of shrines (Preston 1992: 36), modern mechanical means of transportation violates the "very essence" of pilgrimage
(Bleie 2003: 180, 183) and that holy places have been turned into "tourist spectacles" (Singh and Haigh 2015). Tourism, therefore, is often assumed to lead to a dilution or secularization of pilgrimage as it turns pilgrims into tourists and pilgrimage into "religious tourism" (Smith 1992: 3–4).

The notion that pilgrimage and tourism be a dichotomy is partly a product of Christian biases (Stausberg 2011: 19), and receives further support from the widespread notion that tourism and the idea of being a tourist stands for something superficial, commercialized and ultimately distasteful (Cheong and Miller 2000: 372). However, the conception that commercial forces and commodification is somehow contrary to pilgrimage and religiosity has been challenged repeatedly. In the introduction to their seminal volume on *Contesting the Sacred* (1991), John Eade and Michael Sallnow points out that the "conjunction of markets and pilgrimage is well documented for many parts of the world" throughout history (1991: 25–6). Suzanne Kaufman's study of Lourdes reveals how the growth of the shrine from the late nineteenth century was precisely tied to an emerging commercial culture that enabled modern forms of popular religiosity, thereby debunking the idea that "spirituality resides beyond the dross of the marketplace" (2005: 7). This insight has been carried forward by Ian Reader in *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace* (2014), where he argues that "the dynamics of the marketplace, with its themes of pilgrimage being promoted, reshaped, invented and exhibited to increase their custom, along with issues of consumerism and the acquisition of material goods and souvenirs, are not antithetical to pilgrimage (or to religion), but crucial to its successful functioning, development, appeal and nature" (2014: 15).

This dissertation builds on these insights to consider the constructive role commercial forces and agencies can play in perpetuating pilgrimages, allowing them to grow, and reshape rather than do away with pilgrimage religiosity. As argued by Stausberg, modernities across the globe have stimulated pilgrimages (2011: 56–7), and secular agencies including tourist boards have played an important role in revitalizing pilgrimage routes (2011: 60–2). While this involvement has introduced new non-religious interests and impulses into pilgrimage travel, it has not lead to a wholesale secularization of pilgrimages but rather to adaptive responses (2011: 66).
The interplay model: Productive encounters at the intersection between tourism and pilgrimage

Even though Ian Reader insightfully deals with and incorporates various aspects of tourism in his exploration of pilgrimages – including the tourist industry, tourist agencies, travel agencies, guidebooks, changing motivations for traveling and the very act of holidaying – he tends to subsume tourism under the rubric of commerce and entertainment and not treat it on its own, as pointed out in a recent review (Thibeault 2015). Scholarly debates on the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism are only briefly alluded to (2014: 14, 102). Reader finds that the involvement of "tourist boards and related interest groups" tends to secularize pilgrimages and downplay its religious dimensions (2014: 192–3), a notion I challenge with reference to Hindu pilgrimage in the third article. Moreover, tourism as such is never explicitly defined and at times it is used to refer to nonreligious travel such as when the ludic and touristic are treated as coterminous (2014: 188). Here, tourism again appears to be defined through a particular kind of traveler behavior typical of "the tourist".

Stausberg (2011: 64–8) speaks of a "touristification of pilgrimage", a process that similarly focuses mostly on travel practices, such as when religious and nonreligious motivations comingle in pilgrimage travel, "tourists" visit pilgrimage sites and "pilgrims" seek out nonreligious tourist attractions. In the latter case of touristification, the distinction between different kinds of travellers is again activated. I therefore avoid the term touristification and instead follow his more encompassing perspective that the interface between tourism and pilgrimage results in various processes including accommodation and resistance (Stausberg 2011: 71).

As is the case with pilgrimage (and indeed religion), scholars disagree on how to define tourism (Burns 1999: 22–9; Hall 2003: 7–15). In relation to pilgrimage, tourism has generally been addressed as a type of travel, standing for something tourists do, but tourism can also be defined as an industry and commercial phenomena. With an eye to understanding how pilgrimage traditions have developed in modern times, I suggest that tourism, as a historical entity, should be conceptualized as the coming together of a range of phenomena in mid-nineteenth century Europe. It was enabled by new means of transportation (in particular

8 See the index of Reader’s book (2014) to find the page numbers where he deals with these elements of tourism.
9 One page 8, however, Stausberg (2011) defines the pilgrim as "one type of tourist".
railways), growing living standards that allowed for cheap mass-transportation of non-elites (Hall 2003: 45; Norman 2011: 83; Towner 1985: 232; Verhoeven 2013: 264) and industrialization that not only paved the way for a modern tourist industry, but also introduced the notion of leisure conceptualized as time and activities distinct from work, a separation crystallizing in late eighteenth century Britain (Hall 2003: 46–7; Hannam and Knox 2010: 48–9) with increasing demands for holidays (Walton 1981). These conditions led to the development of a formal tourist industry with travel agencies (in particular Thomas Cook) and other services supporting recreational travel (Böröcz 1992; Towner 1985: 321; Verhoeven 2013: 278). This is also the period in which travel guidebooks assumed the shape they have today (Mackenzie 2005: 21), and the terms 'tourism' and 'tourist' in their linguistic variations were spreading in usage, indicating the development of a specific modern travel culture. These developments have alternately been referred to as mass tourism (Hall 2003: 44), travel-capitalism (Böröcz 1992) and modern tourism (Verhoeven 2013). Tourism, in this sense, can be located as an industry and a particular form of travel or travel culture.

Turning to the second half of the twentieth century one can see the development of what is sometimes referred to as global tourism ushered by newer forms of transportation including motorcars, buses and aeroplanes. In this period we see a dramatic expansion and spread of the tourist industry (Cohen 1996: 59; Dwyer 2005: 5, 7; Fyall and Garrod 2005: 66–9; Jafari 1975) as well as local variants of a now global travel consumerism (Lanfant 1995: 3; Theobald 2005: 8; Urry 2001: 3). The tourist industry becomes increasingly international, facilitating travel both between and within countries all over the globe. In the same period an increasing number of governmental and intergovernmental agencies are established to manage and promote tourism (Burns 1999: 125; Cohen 1996: 59; Urry 2001: 2; Wanhill 2005: 368, 389). Today, the World Tourism Organization of the UN coordinates the tourism sector internationally, and provides working definitions of tourism and tourist that many governments employ. With this, tourism has become an important sector that motivates nation-states and their various public institutions to act, create policies, usher marketing initiatives and contract various development projects. Besides denoting a set of behaviors related to traveling and a composite industry, tourism is now also a governmental affair.
With this historical perspective that does not place the figure of the tourist at the center but rather bring together a range of elements, one can begin to analyze tourism's effect on pilgrimage traditions. Inspired by Michael Stausberg's conceptualization of religion and tourism (2011: 8), I suggest that we can separate between pilgrimage and tourism as two identifiable domains of socio-cultural activities that historically have been sustained by different institutions and organizations. Tourism, as I have suggested above, can be conceptualized in a much clearer way than as a particular type of traveler, making it better suited for historical interpretations than ideal-typical travel figures. Conversely, a pilgrimage tradition, in this perspective, refers not primarily to the pilgrim, but instead what Alan Morinis (1984: 2) has referred to as a socio-cultural institution consisting of "the total set of symbols, history, rituals, legends, behaviors, deities, locations, specialists or whatever" related to religious sites that draw more than local residents to their ambit.

If we isolate the very act of travelling or look at individual travelers one can agree with earlier studies that one often cannot really make a clear-cut distinction between pilgrimage and tourism. On the other hand, we will have fewer difficulties in separating between institutions, organizations and paradigmatic practices tied to the domains of pilgrimage or tourism as I have outlined them here. Looking specifically at Hindu pilgrimage and tourism we can see that they historically are tied to different genres of literature (e.g. mahatmyas and guidebooks\(^{10}\)), occupational groups (e.g. pilgrimage priests and tourist guides), organizations (e.g. temples and travel agencies) and certain practices (e.g. deity worship and sightseeing).

At the same time, the fact that we can separate between pilgrimage and tourism does not preclude the possibility of significant overlap and interaction across the two domains. In fact, it is the very interplay between the two that forms a common theme throughout the dissertation. Guidebooks and mahatmyas incorporate elements from each other, pilgrimage priests and tourist guides perform overlapping roles, deity worship and sightseeing are combined in the same trip, temples are made into tourist attractions and travel agencies tap into the pilgrimage market by creating package tours to pilgrimage sites. Instead of seeing either pilgrimage or tourism or claiming they can no longer be distinguished, I suggest we think of them as engaging in an

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\(^{10}\) Mahatmyas refer to a genre of religious texts devoted to describing the greatness of a place of pilgrimage.
ongoing interplay. In this perspective there has not been a development "from pilgrimage to package tour", instead pilgrimages are now being packaged by travel agencies. The resulting product – a pilgrimage package tour – comes as a result of the interplay between pilgrimage and tourism.

The advantage of this interplay model is that it opens up for research questions beyond the earlier "is this pilgrimage or tourism" or "is s/he a pilgrim or a tourist?" With the interplay model we can look at how aspects of tourism transform and tap into Hindu pilgrimage, and how aspects of Hindu pilgrimage adapt to and transform in relation to tourism. The coming together of the various elements and forces of tourism and pilgrimage is, in this perspective, not simply a story of a pristine tradition in decline, but involves a series of productive encounters between actors, institutions and practices tied to two separate domains producing new combinations and configurations. The outcome of these new combinations and configurations might in some cases be related to the removal of earlier religious patterns, but may also produce new religious forms, a regeneration of religious practices and beliefs or a reworking and repackaging of traditional practices. In short, the interplay model invites us to study the productive encounters that take place on the intersection of pilgrimage and tourism.

This approach differs from another recent call for separating between pilgrimage and tourism that, while perpetuating Christian biases (Palmer et. al. 2012: 77–8) and the understanding of tourism and pilgrimage as travel behaviors or styles of travel (81), retains the same typological focus as earlier studies: the arguments advanced continue to deal with the question of whether a particular travel event is a pilgrimage or tourism. In fact, the authors’ insistence on separating pilgrimage from tourism corresponds with the way in which some religious actors strives to maintain a clear separation between the religious and the mundane. This of course does not open up for an analysis of how pilgrimage traditions have adapted to tourism and tourism affects the operation of pilgrimages, as the dynamic interplay between the two spheres is not considered.

The missing link: Looking at mediators, intermediary agencies and formations operating between pilgrims and the places they go

To tease out how the interplay between tourism and Hindu pilgrimage involves a series of productive encounters, I do something different from earlier pilgrimage
studies that typically either take a specific place as its main object of study (cf. Coleman & Eade, 2004, pp. 2–4) or the process of a group's journey (Turner: 1973; Turner and Turner 1978). Such approaches tend to obscure or overlook the importance of mediators and intermediary forces and agencies that operate between place and pilgrim. After all, pilgrims are but one of many actors and agencies, including external and secular ones, that help produce and facilitate pilgrimage practices (Reader 2014: 14). As Ian Reader points out (2014: 20),

...[n]either journey nor practitioner operate or exist in a vacuum; the places pilgrims visit are shaped by various forces, as with, for example, the motives by officials who might invent new miracle tales, develop new displays, create new buildings, icons, spectacles and events to attract pilgrims or the prevailing transport and economic conditions of the time that facilitate (or otherwise) travel.

Echoing this, scholars of tourism have explored the ways in which tourists are embedded in a network of a wide variety of both on- and off-site tourism brokers (Cheong & Miller 2000: 381) including transportation service providers, travel agencies, tourist guides, public tourism departments and their bureaucrats, attraction developers and architects, guards, supervisors and administrators of professional management set-ups. As travellers move from place to place they are regularly targeted by "stage-managers" and "directors" that instruct appropriate behavior, constrain and condition their activities (Edensor 2000, 2001).

Following up on these insights, all the articles in this dissertation focus on mediators and intermediary agencies and formations that operate between pilgrims and the places they go, including transportation services, travel agencies, itineraries, tourist boards, guides, pilgrimage priests and guidebooks. In this way, by employing the interplay model and focusing specifically on mediating structures, this dissertation fills a crucial gap in pilgrimage studies and the study of pilgrimage and tourism, by allowing us to investigate how a pilgrimage tradition operates in the age of global tourism. Treating tourism and pilgrimage as two separate domains engaging in an ongoing interplay opens up a new landscape of interesting questions when we turn to mediators such as guides and pilgrimage priests, questions I address in the first two articles: how do changing travel patterns affect the practice of pilgrimage, pilgrimage religiosity and the trade of pilgrimage priests? How has the institution of pilgrimage priests been affected by tourism in the form of changing travel patterns, demand for luxury, hotels, increase of international tourists, travel agencies and drivers in control of the flow of pilgrims? As we will see, I argue that the guided tour has become an
important format in contemporary Hindu pilgrimage as visits to pilgrimage sites become increasingly speedy: how do guided tours play out in Hindu pilgrimage? How do tourist guides relate pilgrimage myths and animate visitors to engage with temples? How is pilgrimage religiosity enabled and facilitated in such tours? Given that guides are dependent on commission, how do the guides tap into religious practice and faith in order to make a living?

Turning to off-site tourism brokers such as travel agencies and public tourist boards other questions emerge that I have tackled in the two latter articles: What are the main interests of tourist boards – including the Ministry of Tourism and regional tourist departments – in relation to Hindu pilgrimage? How do tourist boards and tourism development come together with the sacred geography of Hindu pilgrimage? What happens when a tourist department turns a local pilgrimage into an official tourism circuit and a package tour? How does the involvement of tourist boards change the profile and promotion of a pilgrimage route? What can contemporary pilgrimage guidebooks tell us about the effects of tourism development on religiosity? How are myths and ritual prescriptions of a pilgrimage presented in official guidebooks published by tourism departments? How have travel agencies and the travel industry transformed the practice of visiting pilgrimage sites? What has been the role of the tourism industry in facilitating multi-purpose travel and popular itineraries that combine pilgrimage and non-pilgrimage destinations? What characterizes the popular package tours to pilgrimage sites promoted by travel agencies? What is the connection between itineraries and the kinds of practices (religious and otherwise) participants engage in during a journey?

Before revealing the findings that these questions have yielded, I interrupt the flow of arguments regarding theory and take a step back to reflect on the research process that both led me to and was influenced by these very discussions. Theory, after all, is not merely something that is applied after one has gathered data, but enters at various stages of the research process, including during the collection of empirical materials (Stausberg and Engler 2011: 10–1). At the same time, many other factors help shape the final outcome of a research project, factors I now turn to in relation to methodology and research ethics.
The questions just listed should not be viewed as a set of research questions that were formulated before I set out to do fieldwork, but rather questions that developed over time and emerged from my observations in the field. A style of fieldwork open to suggestions from the field, six separate fieldtrips, an ongoing dialogue with my main supervisor and colleagues, and a continuous reading of earlier studies allowed this project to develop organically over time. The overarching topic of Hindu pilgrimage and tourism was established at the outset, but the specific cases crystalized gradually based on cues and suggestions that emerged from my erstwhile exploration of travel agencies in New Delhi and the various places and people that these eventually led me to. In this way the total fieldwork comprised explorative and more open-ended trips,

Upscale travel agency in New Delhi. Temples of three different religions feature as destinations in the images.

on one occasion in relation to a month long stay at the Landor Language school, and trips with a focused research agenda. Five main sites and clusters of sites crystalized: New Delhi, Rishikesh and Haridwar, Vrindavan and Mathura, the Himalayan Char Dham pilgrimage and Vaishno Devi.\footnote{The material gathered from Vishno Devi, however, have not make it into the four articles, a point I return to below.} Generous travel support allowed me to go on
six separate fieldtrips, with visits in India ranging from two weeks to four months, amounting to a total of 11 months. This kind of back-and-forth process between field and home created a dynamic where insights from one fieldtrip would generate a specific focus for the next, and what emerged as lacunae in the writing phase could be filled by re-visiting sites.

As is typical in the study of religion the fieldwork for this dissertation can be characterized as periodic (Harvey 2011: 219), though "focused ethnography" consisting of relatively short visits and with "intensive use of audiovisual technologies" is also a suitable description (Knoblauch 2005). The inclusion of multiple sites was part of the original research design aimed to capture broader developments. Looking back, I think the multi-sited ethnography helped bring mediators and intermediary forces into sharper focus than my original research proposal envisaged given that it speaks of "people and place" as main loci of investigation (the very focus on which I have ended up critiquing above!). By turning to mediators and intermediary agencies and formations, my fieldwork led me to collect empirical materials that I did not foresee before going to the field, materials that have been less explored in both the study of religion in general, and the study of Hindu pilgrimage in particular, including audio-recordings of guided tours of tourist guides and pilgrimage priests, travel brochures and popular itineraries, guidebooks, reviews on TripAdvisor, promotional materials, official documents of tourism departments and planners including policy documents, master-plans and funding schemes.

Given my familiarity with Hindi, I had decided to limit my research to sites where that is the dominant language. My first trip took me to New Delhi where I initiated my research efforts. It was November 2012, and I began my explorations in the capital by going to travel agencies to see how they were tapping into pilgrimage and what pilgrimage sites were trending. I spoke to travel agents, collected brochures and participated in two of the most popular day tours that dominated the travel market – one to Rishikesh and Haridwar and the other to Agra, Mathura and Vrindavan. What struck me in both cases was that the guided tours defined what we got to do and see to a large extent. Returning back to my office in Bergen, conferring with my supervisor,

12 Besides one and a half years of studying Sanskrit as an undergraduate, I studied Hindi for one year at Oxford University and stayed for a month at the Landor Language school as part of this project.
I decided to further explore these guided tours that would eventually be used as the backbone for the two first articles of the dissertation.13

When I returned to Haridwar and Rishikesh over the course of five weeks in 2013 I managed with the help of local residents to locate two sites where tourist guides would gather in the mornings to wait for potential customers. At the bus parking in Rishikesh the guides were very friendly and allowed me to follow along on their tours and audio-record the proceedings. This was not the case in Haridwar where groups of guides tied to different travel agencies appeared to be in conflict over customers when I arrived on the scene. It was difficult to locate guides who were willing to let me record their tours. During her fieldwork on guiding in Indonesia, anthropologist Karin Bras relates that she sometimes recorded guided tours without asking for permission (2000: 15), in part because she feared that their knowledge of the recorder would alter their narratives and make them feel awkward. I always asked for permission from the guides, and did not notice any awkwardness due to my presence: their tours appeared to follow a set script that most of them performed without much animation.

13 Space does not permit me to provide a fuller account of other considerations that were in play, including the decision to limit the focus from Jain and Hindu sites to Hindu sites only.
I did however record without consent from the shopkeepers inside the shops that the guides would bring us to. Here the shopkeeper would give his presentation of various goods he wanted to promote. Following the guidelines of the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees,\textsuperscript{14} researchers should, as a general rule, inform participants in a study of the nature of the research and ask for consent. Exceptions from this general rule apply in relation to observations in open arenas, of which the guided tour is clearly an example, and indeed the gathering of groups of people inside a shop where the owner publicly presents his goods. Exceptions also apply in case there is no direct contact with the participant in question and where the information could be considered less sensitive. The content of the shopkeepers’ sales pitch was completely impersonal and I did not engage them directly, but rather kept in the background observing the proceedings. Moreover, I have not provided any information that could locate the shop/s (or staff) of which there are a great number in Rishikesh. The anonymity of the shopkeepers have been safeguarded in order to ensure that my reporting could not affect their business.

Another set of challenges presented themselves in Vrindavan where most of the guides belong to the community of pilgrimage priests or pandas. Pandas are known to have developed secret languages by which they communicate business matters in front of unknowing pilgrims. Given this atmosphere of secrecy, I found that most of the pandas I interacted with in Vrindavan did not want to talk about the commercial aspects of their trade and its development over time, but instead focus on the stories of Krishna and history of Vrindavan. After approaching a large number I finally found two willing guides who let me follow them on tours and later interview them. My interactions with these pandas were shaped by somewhat contradictory concerns. On the one hand, their traditional trade is declining while the community as a whole is criticized by pilgrims and local organizations for the way they treat visitors. I therefore found it appropriate to protect the individual anonymity of those I engaged with given that personal exposure could potentially affect their livelihood. On the other hand, local observers told me that while Vrindavan residents are aware of the dubious methods used by the pandas, they keep out of it since public critique can result in violent repercussions. Seeing no reason to doubt this threat, I have referred to

some of my interlocutors sharing their knowledge of the *pandas'* trade as "local observers" both here and in the final article in order to protect their identity, though the title is somewhat nebulous.

![Guided tour underway in Rishikesh. Ganges on the left.](image)

When I last visited Vrindavan to interact further with *pandas* with the assistance of my partner and colleague, Moumita Sen, we were discouraged more than once by younger men who came up to us while we were interviewing others. They appeared threatening and asked what our "survey" would contain. The experiences made us uncomfortable and we decided to end the research efforts to avoid any further confrontations. Finally, I will admit that I struggled to find suitable ways to represent the methods *pandas* use to elicit donations given that they cunningly/creatively manipulate/inspire (notice the different ethical charge in the terms) visitors in various ways. The description and analysis in the final draft of the article is the result of manoeuvring between providing an account that some of my peers found to be biased against the *pandas*, and one that strives to maintain empathy for the pilgrimage priests while not shying away from describing a practice that many pilgrims see as deceitful and highly unethical.

The audio-recordings of the guided tours in Haridwar, Rishikesh and Vrindavan became the starting point of the two first articles: (1) "Retailing religion: Guided tours and guide narratives in Hindu Pilgrimage" and (2) "Krishna's curse in the age of
global tourism: Hindu pilgrimage priests and their trade”. In total I participated in 22 guided tours, 10 of which I recorded and translated with assistance from students and colleagues. My knowledge of Hindi was not good enough to translate the recordings alone, but good enough that I could follow each sentence with the help of an Indian student sitting next to me. Mostly we would go through the recordings sentence by sentence, while I typed in the English translation. I also transcribed those sections that seemed particularly interesting into Hindi written in the roman script. This process made me confident that I got an adequate translation of the guide narratives.

Going back to my initial exploration of travel agencies and popular tours in New Delhi, there was one longer package tour that stood out like no other: the Char Dham Yatra (Pilgrimage to the Four Divine Abodes), a pilgrimage route to four pilgrimage centers in the Himalayas.\(^{15}\) It was recurrent in brochures and constantly on the lips of travel agents. My time in Haridwar and Rishikesh, which incidentally serve as starting points for the 12 days long pilgrimage, further convinced me that I should explore its development further. While I had already started to collect information from the local tourist and pilgrimage offices concerning Char Dham in Haridwar and Rishikesh, it was on my fourth fieldtrip from February to May in 2014 that I focused more specifically on Char Dham. I secured interviews with bureaucrats in the Ministry of Tourism in New Delhi and the tourism department of the Uttarakhand State in Dehradun to understand their involvement. The latter department in particular was very helpful, providing me with policy documents, master plans and official materials. In one of these interviews I was told that local politician Kedar Foniya had played a key role in the creation of the first Char Dham package tours, and secured an interview with him. I interviewed the chairman and others in the temple committee of the two most important temples in the Char Dham pilgrimage. In June that same year I returned to participate in the Char Dham, a year after the pilgrimage route had been swept away by a devastating flood that cost thousands of lives. While I have not been able to incorporate my experiences from that tour in this dissertation, I did meet with two individuals after the pilgrimage who had been guides during the early days of the pilgrimage package tour in the mid-1970s.

\(^{15}\) This pilgrimage is also referred to as the “Himalayan” or the “small” Char Dham to distinguish it from the all-India Char Dham that has a much longer history and serves as the “original” model. In the context of my fieldwork, however, “Char Dham” referred to the Himalayan version.
While cues and suggestions brought me to various people involved in the development of the pilgrimage, I also collected Char Dham guidebooks (along with guidebooks covering Char Dham) and pilgrimage booklets from the tourist offices I visited, the bazaars of Haridwar and elsewhere. The various interviews, official documents from the tourist boards and the guidebooks became the backbone of the third article titled "Pilgrimage expansion through tourism in contemporary India: The development and promotion of a Hindu pilgrimage circuit." In the first part I use the interviews and materials from the tourist boards to find that the state has been heavily involved in popularizing Char Dham under the rubric of tourism development. This raises questions concerning the effects of tourism development driven by economic concerns on the religious aspects of the pilgrimage. To assess this impact I conducted a content analysis of the Char Dham guidebooks.

Content analysis can be used to identity changes over time and test hypotheses (Nelson and Woods 2011: 110–1). Thus I could compare potential changes in the guidebooks vis-à-vis earlier genres of pilgrimage promotion and test the argument that tourism development leads to a toning down of religious communication. Following the procedures of content analysis with selection of corpus, identifying units to be coded and categories for classification (Nelson and Woods 2011: 112–3), I soon realized I had to cut down on the generated data in order to fit the material into the article. In the end I ended up including an analysis of four official guidebooks of the tourist department given their wide circulation and the fact that they are the creation of the tourist board. Moreover, I narrowed the coding to focus on (a) introduction, description and framing of Char Dham and specific sites; (b) types of activities and audience addressed; (c) the treatment of religious claims and affairs (myths, rituals and ritual efficacy, cures and miracles).

16 Here I had the fortune of being able to consult Andrea Pinkney's (2013) study of Char Dham mahatmyas (the traditional pre-guidebook genre for promoting pilgrimage) from the 1950s onwards.
For the fourth and final article I returned to where the project had started, looking at travel agencies and their promotion of pilgrimage tours. In the paper, titled "Repackaging India's sacred geography: Travel agencies and pilgrimage-related travel", I explore how travel agencies use the sacred geography of India to develop package tours, how participants incorporate day tours to pilgrimage sites into their journeys and what kind of pilgrimage religiosity these day tours facilitate. In total I collected 69 brochures from travel agencies, most of which I had scanned while doing fieldwork. These provided insight into which sites and places receive support from the travel industry and the ways in which they package various kinds of destinations and trips onto one another. Here I also made use of the ca. 140 pages of computer-written field notes from participant observation of tours to and in the pilgrimage sites. Typically I would take notes on small writing pads and sometimes make audio-recordings of myself describing things I had seen or conversations I had with pilgrims and others, only to write them down on my computer later in the day. I also took copious pictures while participating in tours, which turned out to be useful both in preparing presentations and dissemination, but also as helpful mnemonic devices and in themselves a kind of visual field notes.
It was during participant observation while traveling, but also when interviewing, that my identity as a Norwegian, non-practicing Christian, around 30 years old, white, blond, male scholar played a part in creating specific research conditions. I should say that this was far from my first encounter with India having been there as a tourist, an exchange student and fieldworker on numerous visits. Strolling around in famous places of pilgrimage I was regularly approached by domestic tourists wanting to engage with me. Over time, I probably became increasingly less friendly in terms of being asked to pose for pictures and making new Facebook friends.

For many travellers, this white man asking questions about pilgrimage, purpose and tourism in an inadequate Hindi was clearly part of the thrill of travelling to new places and seeing exciting things. During the brief period I worked alongside Moumita Sen in Vrindavan I saw how much more quickly she was drawn into the personal lives of one of my respondents, as he saw in her a fellow Indian who might assist his daughters in applying for colleges and universities. This then was a clear indication of how the identities we carry as researcher affect our research efforts.

In relation to the tourist guides in Rishikesh and pilgrimage guides in Vrindavan it seemed that my foreignness worked to my advantage to the extent that some of them seemed genuinely happy to interact with me as a white foreign scholar. At the same time, and this was particularly true in relation to the pilgrimage priests, the
conversations we had were shaped by a kind of ambassadorial zeal to showcase Hinduism or at least focus on the "spiritual" aspects of Hindu pilgrimage, both projects ill-suited to my own research interests. While I always listened to whatever my interlocutors wanted to say, my questions regarding the more mundane side of pilgrimage seemed to produce a kind of disappointment in some of my respondents. To initiate conversation and be granted time for an interview, sometimes with an audio-recorder, I found that my business card with the words "research scholar" printed boldly (and in bold) was helpful. This was a suggestion I received from a Jain interlocutor during my first fieldtrip who suggested that it would introduce me more properly and lend more authority than my sheer presence and oratory skills would do. The business card will from now on be a standard fieldwork prop for me.

The more or less complete absence of women in the articles (beyond participation in the tours I describe) is noteworthy. On the one hand, this reflects the male dominance in the kinds of occupations I engaged with, including bureaucrats, guides, priests, shopkeepers and travel agents. On the other hand, I am sure that my own gender played a role in this. I did, however, get close to the three women in their late 50s to 60s who were part of the Char Dham pilgrimage tour I participated in, the experiences of which I was somehow not able to in the four articles as they developed. Again, when Moumita and I visited one of the panda's home, Moumita soon became friendly with the daughters in the house who shared things about their lives thereby providing insight into aspects of the household and family that most likely would have passed me had I come on my own. On the other hand, I befriended a young man who was the son of a panda in Vrindavan, who liked to bring me along to smoke cigarettes in hiding and taught me the local technique of how to remove the smell of tobacco from one's mouth. Different identities open different doors in the field.

There is much material from my fieldwork that is not reflected in the dissertation, in particular in relation to the Viashno Devi shrine that has become immensely popular in recent decades, and temple complexes and religious displays that incorporate elements from theme parks and tourist attractions. This excess material is
in part a result of the article thesis format and the given time frame.\textsuperscript{17} Where the monograph is encompassing and allows for more material in the form of descriptive accounts, the article is narrower and more focused. There were several reasons for choosing articles over a monograph. To begin with the multi-sited fieldwork produced specific cases suitable for separate analysis. The article format would give me not only the opportunity to publish, but also publish in journals tied to different disciplines and areas of studies including tourist studies, South Asia studies and the study of religion. It also allowed me to structure the work process in a way that I experienced as helpful, breaking it down into smaller units, and allowing me to start afresh when one article had been submitted. Though it would have been gratifying to incorporate more of my findings in this dissertation, I hope I will be given the opportunity to put the excess material to work in future projects.

\textsuperscript{17} In Norway, PhD candidates are typically hired with a salary for three years, with half a year set aside for coursework. Mine was a four-year contract, the additional year designated for teaching and administrative work.
Main findings

So what do the four articles tell us about the interplay between Hindu pilgrimage and tourism in contemporary India? As a way to structure the presentation of my main findings I have ventured out to formulate three main propositions that summarize, in a condensed manner, the research outcomes. I will open with the first proposition, and then weave together the findings of the four articles that I will refer to by numbers according the presentation above: (1) "Retailing religion: Guided tours and guide narratives in Hindu Pilgrimage", (2) "Krishna's curse in the age of global tourism: Hindu pilgrimage priests and their trade", (3) "Pilgrimage expansion through tourism in contemporary India: The development and promotion of a Hindu pilgrimage circuit" and (4) "Repackaging India's sacred geography: Travel agencies and pilgrimage-related travel". The first proposition points to the interrelated nature of transportation, facilitators of worship and religiosity.

PROPOSITION A.

Movement and money condition the mediation of religion at places of pilgrimage.

In using the phrase "mediation of religion" I am not referring to various forms of media (print, electronic) or what is sometimes referred to as mediatization. Instead I employ it here to refer to the aspects of a religion (in this case Hinduism) that are activated, emphasized and facilitated by on-site mediators (guides, priests, shopkeepers, drivers and tour leaders) and intermediary agencies (transportation companies and travel agencies) and formations (package tours, itineraries and guided tours). Given the multivocality of places of pilgrimage and religious traditions, the mediating structures will accentuate certain aspects or dimensions more than others.

Speaking of on–site mediators of religion points to those middlemen (pandas/pilgrimage priests and local guides) who, in order to make a living, guide pilgrims around, facilitate religious activities (e.g. worship, rituals and purchase of religious objects) and the engagement of a place as a place of pilgrimage by evoking religious narratives and framing the visit. "Money" is of course a somewhat crude coinage, but is meant to cover to the personal interests of these on-site mediators that derive an income from providing services to pilgrims and facilitating pilgrimage
religiosity. Finally movement refers to the travel patterns of pilgrims both to and in places of pilgrimage. Thus, the interconnectedness of movement, money and mediation points to the way in which travel patterns, the personal interests of pandas and guides and pilgrimage religiosity are tied together. This is clearly expressed in the guided tours conducted by tourist guides in Rishikesh and Haridwar (1) and pandas in Vrindavan (2).

The movement of pilgrims in all of these places is increasingly characterized by short visits, either as part of one-day excursions or longer journeys with busy schedules designed to cover as many places as possible. Historically this pattern is the result of the impact of tourism with the introduction of motorized mass-transportation but also travel agencies and transportation companies creating package tours and popularizing dense itineraries (4). With visitors spending as little as a few hours before moving on, the guided tour becomes a suitable mode of interaction with temples and deities as it can cover a lot of ground in a short time.

Day tour by bus to Agra, Mathura and Vrindavan.

Most pandas in Vrindavan, therefore, make an income by offering guided tours and some of them carry business cards listing both "ritual priest" and "guide" as professions (2). As elsewhere, the traditional exchange model (jajmani system) between pilgrimage priests and pilgrims is waning in Vrindavan in part due to the changing travel patterns, which has forced pandas to adjust their services. Rather than
accommodating pilgrims in their homes and officiating various rituals, the guided tour is now in many cases the sole arena for pandas to secure ritual income.

In their contemporary avatar as guides, the pandas of Vrindavan conduct religious sightseeing tours – framed as a darshan yatra (drashan tour) – in which they aim to make pilgrims give donations out of which they get a share. The donations are facilitated in specially designated temples referred to as "Nanda Rai" (Nanda’s house), since pandas make the claim that they are connected to Krishna’s foster father Nanda. To boost the significance of these otherwise inconspicuous temples, the pandas have pilgrims believe it is the "main temple" of Vrindavan, associating it with the markers of Bankey Bihari temple, which by most would be considered to be the most important temple, housing the most potent deity. Moreover, a familiar religious narrative is modified to accentuate the necessity of giving a donation or religious gift-giving (dan). Accordingly, a terrible curse in this current age of decay (kaliyug) was set in motion by Krishna, the only remedy for which is to give a donation at the "main temple". In order to secure customers for their tours, some pandas keep strategic connections with travel agencies and local drivers or open travel agency offices where they can cement such connections and combine their priestly guide service with other tourist services. While pandas on their side might legitimize their ways by claiming that the degenerated pilgrims of today need to be told to give donations, participants in these tours can be found characterizing the pandas as swindlers on TripAdvisor.

The establishment of the guided tour as an important format in the operation of Hindu pilgrimage has also paved the way for tourist guides as facilitators of worship (1). In both Rishikesh and Haridwar, we can find tourist guides working with travel agencies or independently, approaching incoming buses offering the passengers a guided tour of temples and sites. Whereas the pandas of Vrindavan continue to use the time-honored idiom of gift-giving (dan) as a means to secure an income, the tourist guides aim to inspire pilgrims to purchase religious items in a shop from which they draw a commission. Tourist guides have found it particularly useful to spend most time talking about the Rudraksha stone, popularly used as prayer beads. Besides animating participants to do short acts of worship in temples they introduce, they also make sure to bring them to a Rudraksha tree where they extol the many virtues of the stone in the fruit it carries, its miraculous and healing powers. Eventually, the pilgrims are brought to a shop where the shopkeeper makes his sales pitch. The tours that introduce pilgrims to Rishikesh and Kankhal are thus structured according to a
A religio-commercial agenda that coordinates commercial and religious interests. The guides' framing of the sites visited and the recounting of the Shiva myth tied to Kankhal are influenced by their promotion of Rudraksha as they invoke a range of Hindu practices and concepts including *darshan* (auspicious viewing), sin, salvation, protection from ghosts and the evil eye.

Columns outside closed shops in Rishikesh advertising for camping and the Rudraksha prayer bead. The signboard in the middle reads "*Darshan of the one-faced Rudraksha*", inviting potential customers to come and get a glimpse of the rarely shaped Rudraksha stone that only has one ridge and is believed to be extraordinary powerful.

When pilgrims stand at the ancient site of Kankhal, guides make the myth of Shiva and Daksha be about the origin of the Rudraksha tree (1). In Vrindavan, pilgrims are told that Krishna cursed all parents ensuring that their children might be "eaten by time" (euphemism for dying prematurely) (2). These tours of Vrindavan, Haridwar and Rishikesh tell us that what pilgrims see and hear at pilgrimage sites is shaped by the interest of the guides and priests. Mythological stories are modified and adjusted. Pilgrimage priests adopt their services to changing travel patterns, while tourist guides have entered the operation of Hindu pilgrimage. The significance of and connections between money, movement and mediation have their specific expressions today, but also resonate with other studies of Hindu pilgrimage. The importance of money in the form of ritual income has always been a key engine in the history and expansion of Hindu pilgrimage (Jacobsen 2012: 64, 79, 85–8). The coming of the railway changed the pace of pilgrim traffic, which again affected ritual proceedings. As a pilgrimage...
priest in Gaya explained Sanskritist Monier Williams already in the 1870s, pilgrims' use of railway had led to a sharp decrease in ghosts and associated lengthy rituals (Bayly 1998: 150). Speedier travel on earth led to speedier travel to heaven.

Besides mass-transportation, travel agencies and transportation companies play a key role in facilitating travel patterns that shape the mediation of religion at pilgrimage sites. Looking at travel agencies and the day tours they arrange to sites of pilgrimage (4), we further see how movement in the form of package tours produce particular kinds of engagements with temples, deities and associated rituals. Traditionally, and as spelled out in the authoritative Sanskrit treatises on Hindu pilgrimage, rituals and ritual proceedings with priests have been of vital importance (Salomon 1985: xiv). Day tours, however, demand speed and efficiency in temple visits resulting in a scheduling of pilgrimage (Reader 2014: 103–4). Drivers, conductors and guides continuously remind pilgrims that they need to be back in time, that they only have a certain amount of time inside temple compounds before the bus will move on. In the context of Hinduism this scheduling leads to a privileging of *darshan* and donation as the principle religious acts. As pilgrims are herded from one temple to another, they move quickly from one deity image to the next, engaging in quick sessions of worship in as many temples as possible. The growing use of terms
like darshan yatra/darshan tours by on-site mediators reflects the tendency towards itinerized visits to pilgrimage sites where darshan rather than rituals dominate. This brings me to my next proposition.

Swift sessions of darshan in Rishikesh during a guided tour.

**PROPOSITION B.**

Tourism has not been a secularizing force, but rather brought changes in and a repositioning of the religious aspects of Hindu pilgrimage.

Traditional pilgrimage rituals are no doubt in decline. We see it in the trade of pilgrimage priests adapting to the role of tourist guides, cooperating with drivers and travel agencies or starting their own travel agencies (2). The tourist guide, ostensibly a non-religious actor, has entered the pilgrimage scene (1). The increased mobility supported by the travel industry and encouraged in the day tours of travel agencies leaves little or no time for the traditional rituals (4). Nevertheless, religious communication and devotional practices still prosper. The guided tour has become a key format, but is markedly different from the guided tour of cultural tourism. The narratives of tourist guides and pilgrimage priests are steeped in the reservoir of Hinduism as they evoke myths, religious concepts and the notion of miracles and
cures (1, 2). Moreover, they animate participants to worship deities by having their auspicious viewing (darshan), which after all remains the key activity in day tours to pilgrimage sites organized by travel agencies (4). Even if the traditional jajmani system is in decline, pilgrimage priests in Vrindavan continue to employ the time-honored notion of religious gift-giving as a means to make a living. Guides in Rishikesh and Haridwar might have replaced donation with retail as the key medium of transaction for income with pilgrims, but in so doing they still rely on the perpetuation and promotion of religious faith and practices. In the end, the recounting of the deeds of deities and pilgrimage myths not only continues in the guide narratives of both priests and guides, they are also preserved in the tourist guidebooks for the Himalayan Char Dham pilgrimage (3).

The Himalayan Char Dham, which takes its name from the all-India Char Dham ("Four divine abodes"), is a pilgrimage route to Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath – four pilgrimage sites situated high up in the Himalayan mountains in the state of Uttarakhand. The popularity of the pilgrimage started growing after the Sino-Indian war of 1962 had ensured better roads, and especially from the mid-1970s onward when the regional tourism board created the first ever Char Dham package tour. The tourism authorities saw in Char Dham a readymade tourism circuit – a unit of three or more sites that can be developed in terms of infrastructure and services,
promoted and branded as one product and consumed by tourists. Since then, the involvement of tourist authorities has helped establish Char Dham as the pre-eminent Himalayan pilgrimage itinerary by subjecting the route to various marketing strategies. Tourism development has been a necessary rather than a negative factor in the growth of Char Dham as a popular Hindu pilgrimage route. Ian Reader (2014: 190–3) argues that as pilgrimages across the world become utilized by secular agencies for social and economic regeneration, their public representation and marketing increasingly de-emphasize religious meanings. According to him the involvement of tourist boards elsewhere have helped turn pilgrimages into a cultural heritage tour or hiking holiday while faith, miracles and religiosity are being increasingly downplayed. How has tourism development affected the profile of Char Dham?

A promising place to look for answers is the promotional literature sold in the bazaars. A close reading of four official guidebooks – two in Hindi and English respectively – produced and distributed by the tourist department lends little support the "tourism-pilgrimage secularization thesis". Religious pursuits remain vital selling points for embarking on the journey. Char Dham guidebooks provide instructions in ritual matters and mention potential rewards for conducting them, recount mythological narratives and report miracles as true events for the faithful. At the same time guidebooks have toned down the declarative tone of the traditional mahatmya genre that would promise pilgrims all kinds of rewards from coming to pilgrimage.
sites, conduct rituals and worship deities. Where *mahatmyas* and *pandas* relate mythological events as real, both Char Dham guidebooks and the tourist guides favor passive constructions like "it is said" or "it is believed" (*mana/kaha jata hai*). Still, the concerns of heritage, historical significance, architecture and artistic merits have not replaced the religious framing of the sites, temples and deity images of Char Dham. Instead, one is struck by the emphasis on natural beauty and the branding of Char Dham as a picturesque pilgrimage that complement the religious selling points. At times, religious significance and natural beauty is presented as interconnected, signaling a clear departure from pre-modern understandings of nature in the *tirthyatra* tradition.

Pilgrim from Mumbai secures a picture on the descent up to Yamunotri. Guidebooks frame Char Dham as a picturesque pilgrimage.

At the same time, the guidebooks display an expansion of interests to nonreligious activities, offering suggestions for excursions and places of sightseeing with no religious markers. Tourism development in the area is reflected in the way specific sites en route are linked with particular leisure activities such as skiing, mountaineering and fishing. The Char Dham pilgrimage thus opens up for nonreligious pursuits. However, the inclusion of tourist activities and sites is not replacing religious communication but rather complementing it and sometimes
modifying it, suggesting that in twenty-first century India, homage and holiday go hand in hand.

Char Dham guidebooks demonstrate how tourism brings a repositioning of the religious aspects of Hindu pilgrimage. While entertainment and the thrill of traveling and seeing new places have probably always been important aspects of pilgrimage, tourism has provided an industry, tourism departments and a discourse that sanctions such pursuits. Hindu pilgrimage thus becomes an arena that opens up and allows for the combination of various activities and motivations, something that is not just reflected in Char Dham guidebooks, but also modern day mahatmyas (Pinkney 2013). This multi-purpose character is further reflected in popular day tours to pilgrimage sites organized by travel agencies out of New Delhi (4), many of which also include stops at non-religious attractions. The travel market and indeed popular itineraries in general appears to favor of areas where pilgrimage and additional tourist attractions and service cluster together. People wanting to see the Taj Mahal are likely to visit Vrindavan, and vice versa. Religious and nonreligious pursuits complement each other in India's domestic travel culture.

These findings suggest that the pilgrimage-tourism interplay produces changes in rather than the removal of pilgrimage religiosity and associated religious communication. In relation to Ian Reader's argument regarding the reduced focus on religious affairs and miracles, which no doubt can be found in certain cases, one wonders whether these findings reflect a particular resilience in Hinduism. Alternatively, the interplay model might reveal comparable results in other religious and cultural contexts.

**PROPOSITION C.**

Tourist boards and the tourist industry are important co-creators of the current Hindu pilgrimage culture and the contemporary expression of India's sacred geography.

Discussions of pilgrimage traditions sometimes evoke the notion of a sacred geography (e.g. Eck 2012), pointing to the larger network of places and sites sanctified by a religious tradition. The rise of Char Dham demonstrates the active role
tourist boards play in the ever-evolving constellations and profiles of India's sacred geography in the age of global tourism (3). From the Ministry of Tourism down to the regional departments and public tourist corporations, pilgrimage sites and routes have received a significant boost through funding schemes aimed at developing and streamlining pilgrimage infrastructure and services. The Indian government is increasingly involving itself in domestic tourism focusing particularly on circuit development as a source of revenue and job creation. In the mid-1970s, tourism bureaucrat in the region, Kedar Foniya, saw in Char Dham a readymade concept to be turned into a circuit. From turning it into a package tour to providing infrastructural support and promotional efforts, tourist boards have been crucial in putting the Himalayan Char Dham on the map as an extremely popular pilgrimage circuit with hundreds of thousands of participants a year.

Advertisements for the Char Dham pilgrimage/yatra are found everywhere in the pilgrimage bazaars of Haridwar.

The creation of such official circuits shape the popular understanding of the sacred geography, highlighting a few select destinations with supplementary sites for sightseeing and excursions in contrast to the mahatmyas that included a much broader geography of sacred sites. In Char Dham pilgrimage guidebooks, and indeed any popular presentation today, the sacred geography of the region is constructed in relation to the four sites included in the main circuit. In one guidebook the completion of the pilgrimage from Yamunotri to Badrinath is claimed to be a matter of religious
belief (*dharmik manyata*), effectively aligning a unit for tourism management and promotion with religious convention. Through research and policy documents, tourism bureaucrats further look for opportunities of developing Hindu pilgrimage in ways that benefit their aims. The possibility of framing Char Dham in relation to New Age preferences is mentioned in a master plan of the regional tourism department from 2008, suggesting that Char Dham could attract the "high-end domestic/NRI" market if it "begins to combine new-age pilgrim spirituality and tourism…".

Sacred geography and tourism development. A modern day *mahatmya* superimpose mythological theme of Ganga's descent on a geographical map with distances. The pilgrimage is typically covered in a twelve day package tour by bus or car, going from Yamunotri in the west to Badrinath in the east.

Returning briefly to the pilgrimage priests in Vrindavan (2), it is noteworthy that one of the most recent funding schemes from the Ministry of Tourism refers to management challenges in relation to "touts and lapka" culture in the creation of a Krishna Circuit. Being a tacit reference to the guiding activities of the *pandas*, it

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19 NRI stands for non-resident Indians, i.e. Indian citizens living abroad.
21 "Lapka" generally refers to unauthorised guides, photographers and others who cheat and harass tourists.
signals how the increased involvement of tourist boards can shape Hindu pilgrimage in the future.

Travel agencies play a different role as co-creators of contemporary Hindu pilgrimage through their package tours and promotion of select pilgrimage sites (4). Surveying 46 travel brochures and popular tours promoted by travel agencies in New Delhi, Haridwar and Vrindavan I found two key tendencies. First, several popular pilgrimage tours and destinations are either tied to official circuits (such as Char Dham), or benefit from being adjacent to popular circuits (such as Vrindavan and Mathura placed conveniently along the Golden Triangle). Second, the market privileges routes and destinations where pilgrimage and additional tourist resources cluster together, suggesting a dynamic relationship between India's sacred geography and a broader tourist geography. To some extent the popularity of a pilgrimage site is tied to the availability of additional tourism attractions and services, including proximity to other popular destinations nearby.

Billboard in Rishikesh. Pilgrimage sites and tourist attractions cluster together and benefit from one another in popular itineraries.

Travel agencies are key providers of day tours to pilgrimage sites that often include stops at non-religious sites. Engaging with participants in these tours I found that day tours often constitute a short trip that is incorporated into longer journeys conducted for a variety of reasons. In one and the same bus one can find those framing the tour
as a pilgrimage (tirthyatra), others seeing it as part of a multi-purpose trip undertaken for both religious and nonreligious purposes, and finally those that see it as an excursion or "fun trip". Families in three generation often travel together on multi-purpose trips. Day tours organized by travel agencies cater to this entire spectrum that I refer to as pilgrimage-related travel – travel that incorporates visits to pilgrimage sites as part of a journey that may or may not be framed as a pilgrimage.

Characteristic of these day tours in pilgrimage-related travel is that visits to sites of pilgrimage and temples are conducted swiftly and under time pressure to follow a set schedule. This scheduling, that privileges darshan and donation as the main religious acts, applies across the spectrum of pilgrimage-related travel. Package tours and day tours are therefore part of constituting a contemporary pilgrimage culture where various trips and destinations are packaged onto each other as India's sacred geography is repackaged over the counter of travel agencies.
Boy catches a glimpse of the deity while ringing the temple bell in Rishikesh. Donation box in red on the floor. The scheduling of Hindu pilgrimage privileges *darshan* and donation as the principle religious acts.
Conclusion: Pilgrimage in the age of global tourism

Pilgrimage and tourism have mostly been conflated or contrasted in earlier studies. A common strategy has been the typological approach, classifying travellers as either tourists, pilgrims or somewhere in between. In this dissertation, I show that a viable alternative that provides a clearer and more historically grounded conceptualization of tourism, is to treat pilgrimage and tourism as two identifiable domains of socio-cultural activities that historically have been sustained by different institutions and organizations (cf. Stausberg 2011: 8). Pilgrimage traditions have their own histories stretching back to pre-modern times, whereas tourism as we know it today emerges in the nineteenth century. From this time onwards, pilgrimage and tourism have engaged in an interplay, where actors and institutions of each domain engage each other in various ways. The productive encounters between actors, institutions and practices tied to these two separate spheres have produced new combinations and configurations. To name a few examples found in this dissertation, pilgrimage myths and practices have become embedded in guidebooks and the narratives of tourist guides; pilgrimage priests establish travel agencies; Hinduism's sacred geography is re-imagined and re-packaged over the counter in travel agencies and in the conference rooms of tourism planners; nonreligious tourist attractions are included in pilgrimage itineraries and pilgrimage sites are visited by foreign travellers. The interplay model allows us to explore how tourism shapes pilgrimage practices, and how a pilgrimage tradition adapts to tourism. Rather than replacing or removing religion and religious practices, tourism has ushered new ways of promoting, developing, packaging, conducting and discussing pilgrimage. While I have emphasized the productive encounters that take place at the intersection of pilgrimage and tourism, their dynamic interplay involves a range of processes including accommodation, adaptation, negotiation, dispute and resistance (Stausberg 2011: 71).

The interplay model allows for a cross-cultural study of pilgrimage traditions given the expansion of tourism into a global phenomenon. The rise of global tourism rapidly expanding in the second half of the twentieth century has led to the development of a four-fold architecture consisting of (a) a tourism industry, (b) public tourism agencies, (c) a global travel consumerism with regional variations and (d) the spread of semantic fields related to the words tourism and tourist. This four-fold architecture
interacts with pilgrimage traditions all over the world. This effectively amounts to a new comparative research agenda for pilgrimage studies since contemporary pilgrimage takes place in the age of global tourism. In the age of global tourism pilgrimage traditions are inevitably shaped by and interact with these four elements. In the twenty-first century, pilgrims and pilgrimages increasingly take their shape and become recognizable to us in relation to tourism. The pilgrimage traditions of the major religions have been reassembled in the age of global tourism displaying continuity and change, innovation and reinvention. It is to these we turn in the suggested research agenda. In fact, I would argue that it is impossible to imagine a pilgrimage today taking place completely outside the reach of global tourism, if for nothing else, because contemporary pilgrims and the scholars observing them travel with an awareness of 'tourism' and 'tourists'. It is this awareness that continues to perpetuate the stubborn dichotomy between pilgrimage/tourism and pilgrim/tourist in both popular and scholarly discourse.

This last point is crucial: the intuitive understanding of pilgrimage and tourism/pilgrim and tourist as contrasting entities is no longer limited to the western world. We find it in the discourse of pilgrimage priests in Vrindavan and their understanding of how travel patterns and the behavior of visitors have changed. Contemporary visitors, they say, do not have a proper religious spirit (dharmik
bhavna) or the disposition of a pilgrim (tirth ka bhav nahi hai), instead they go on "picnic" and demand convenience (suvidha). Like some of the pandas, the Char Dham guidebooks in English distinguish between the pilgrim/tirthyatri and the tourist. Similar distinctions between the ‘pilgrim’ of the past and the contemporary ‘tourist’ emerged in popular discourse when the Char Dham pilgrimage and state of Uttarakhand was struck by a devastating flood in the summer 2013, killing thousands. Walking around in the Haridwar bazaars just a few weeks after the tragedy, music videos with gruesome images from the flood attracted groups of pilgrims in front of TV-screens continuously showing devotional songs with lyrics rhetorically asking why Ganga became furious. Several local residents and pilgrims I spoke to were of the opinion that the flood was a divine punishment for the misuse of the Char Dham pilgrimage as a picnic outing with non-vegetarian food and alcohol and honeymooners. In a spiritual magazine I picked up at the Prem Mandir complex in Vrindavan one could read the following interpretation:

This display of the wrath of Bholenath [Shiva] was not without reason. In this Kaliyuga, all our sacred places of pilgrimage have become mere picnic spots with mushrooming growth of hotels and restaurants serving tamasik food, with no sense of sanctity and purity. Western music has taken the place of Bhagavannam sankirtan.

Haridwar bazaar. Pilgrims gathering around screens to watch the most popular music video that season with graphic images from the devastating flood of 2013. The lyrics deal with the question of theodicy: why did Ganga display this aggression?
These few examples demonstrate that scholars of pilgrimage and tourism have much to learn by turning their attention to the way in which categories and distinctions that relate to tourism play out in local discourses, and how markers of tourism become part of the religious rhetoric around pilgrimages. Tying this to an important theoretical intervention in pilgrimage studies, we can say that notions of what tourism is and the tourist stands for have provided a global theme on the arena of competing discourses that are part and parcel of pilgrimages across the world (Eade and Sallnow 1991).

The issue of local discourses also begs the question of Hindu pilgrimage and its local variation. While I have consistently referred to "Hindu pilgrimage", it remains to be seen to what extent the key findings reported here resonate with affairs and conditions in other parts of India. More broadly, one would like to know how the interplay between pilgrimage and tourism plays out in other pilgrimage sites, sites that might be more regional or sectarian than the cases I have dealt with here. It has been suggested that pilgrimage in Southern India is more tied up to temples than in Northern India where geographical areas and units play a more prominent role (Jacobsen 2009: 394–95; 2012: 92). How does the interplay between pilgrimage and tourism play out around pilgrimage sites and routes in the south? Another path of inquiry that this dissertation points towards relates to the history of tourism in India. Given my conceptualization of tourism as a historical entity, a historical account of the development of tourism in India will enable us to better understand the trajectories of Hindu pilgrimage since colonial times. A historical grasp of the tandem development of tourism and Hindu pilgrimage in modern India will no doubt help us appreciate why that ignorant British administrator situated in Allahabad in 1868 was so wrong when he predicted that pilgrimage in India would soon die out "as it had in Medieval Europe" (quoted in Maclean 2008: 103).²²

The *pandas* of Vrindavan are not the only ones to put words in the mouth of Krishna. In one of his short stories titled "The Bridge-Builders", Rudyard Kipling has Krishna provide a somewhat different prediction regarding the future of Hindu pilgrimage. At one point in the story, goddess Ganga has gathered the gods to help free her from the chains the bridge-builders are putting her in with their steel

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²² Of course, pilgrimage never died out in Europe anyways and even if certain routes fell out of use, many have since then been "re-discovered" and popularized.
constructions. In the ensuing discussion both Shiva and Hanuman make the point that the "fire-carriage" (i.e. the train) has brought more pilgrims than ever. Krishna, however, warns his divine companions that the people are getting weary of them:

"And to cover that weariness they, my people, will bring to thee, Shiv, and to thee, Ganesh, at first greater offerings and a louder noise of worship. But the word has gone abroad, and, after, they will pay fewer dues to your fat Brahmins. Next they will forget your altars, but so slowly that no man can say how his forgetfulness began." 23

Where the pandas have Krishna threaten the welfare of pilgrims' children, Kipling has him threatening the future of Hindu pilgrimage and indeed the Brahmins themselves. According to Krishna's vision here, Indian modernity will first give Hindu pilgrimage a boost before a slow process of secularization ensues. Contrary to Kipling's Krishna, I have argued that while there is an ongoing shift away from rituals, thus reducing the importance of Brahmins, there is little to indicate that the "noise of worship" in places of pilgrimage will subside any time soon.

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