On ‘Destination’ and ‘Community’

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Having “destinations” as point of departure in much literature in Tourism literature (Franklin & Crang 2001; Hall 2007; Zhao & Richie 2007) is creating a framework for analysis, which is quite different from development studies/anthropology. This paper will address what the author regards as an ‘inbuilt’ contradiction between mainstream tourism and development studies – or branches within these fields – where the point of departure seems quite different. One example: “The private sector may be best placed to identify opportunities, realize the potential of a destination, drive forward the development of product and adopt a range of highly effective responsibilities to communities” (Simpson 2008:9-10). There is a hierarchy of elements in this quote which can capture the differences between points of departure in research when addressing what ‘benefit’ a community might have from a tourism project. The paper will include a discussion of newer literature within the field of ‘mobilities’ (Glick Schiller & Salazar 2013), especially literature, which underscores the importance of anthropological studies of mobility (Salazar & Smart 2011). The theoretical framework is an exploration and discussion of Bauman’s ‘Tourists and Vagabonds’ and his notion of ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 1998, Franklin 2003). Furthermore Richard Chambers’ writings about ‘participation’ and ‘community’ (Chambers 2012) will be used. The discussion will include an analysis of Bolivia’s tourism plan and strategy: ‘Plan Nacional de Turismo and its Plan Estratégico de Desarollo Turistico‘.