These six extracts are taken from a diary I kept summer 2013 whilst I went travelling for a month. Real events, real places, real people with a pinch of sociological thinking....

Day 1 -3rd Jun:

Oh my days! Today was the day me and my best friend Fran have gone travelling for a month. I am so unbelievably excited. Passport – check, Interrail ticket – check, Money – check, Camera – check, Phone – check. Could you imagine if I had forgotten my camera, I kept checking my bag in the airport making sure it was still there! I’m still paranoid from the disaster of Marbella last year dropping my old one in pool. Make sure you do not lose this one. You are not a proper tourist if you do not photograph all the culture you see, right? To prove that I actually went travelling for a month? Or have I just been socially constructed to think that way? Berger (1972) argues the “tourist gaze” is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned learnt “ways of seeing”. We construct ourselves as tourists through these mobile camera images, so I guess it is seen as proof that we have been and seen these other places! This whole travelling thing has turned into this social phenomenon, as a student it is almost odd that you have not been or even considered “finding yourself” travelling. I guess this is part of what being a student is about, freedom and “identity construction” (Conradson and Latham, 2005:137) which seems to be all the range in late modernity.

Day 2-4rd Jun:

Ouch. Still hung over from last night! But hey, welcome to Amsterdam! Crazy night! The vibe here is something totally different to what I have ever experienced before. The red light district is interesting. Disturbing to say the least that prostitution is legal over here, but it is seen as a massive tourist spot so we had to at least check it out. Urry (2002) argued that seeing “unique objects”, i.e. the red light district, is something that people in the “west” are socialised to want to see at some point in ones lifetime. Yet, why is something like the red light district something people want to see? “The trafficking of women into Western Europe to become prostitutes and sex workers is expanding rapidly” (Giddens, 2009: 600). I mean it was quite disturbing and uncomfortable walking down the “De Wallen”. "In the debate of globalisation “Sex Tourism”, the trafficking of people, mostly women and girls, across the world has become a much more significant issue in recent years" (Giddens, 2009:601).
Day 5- 7th June:

Berlin is awesome! What a multi-cultural city. In Berlin you can dress the way you want, look the way you want and you can get away with it. No wonder it is attracting so many young people. Although I am pretty annoyed at myself today, me and Fran made a promise that everywhere we go, we have to try the different food that is on offer in each city that means no McDonalds! Five days in and we broke! Geeeeeee, is there a McDonalds everywhere? It just ruins things. I know why, “Homogenisation”. I did not want to come away to all these different cities and experience the same thing back home! Ritzer (2000) argues the concept of “McDonaldization”. Massive companies are becoming standardised across the globe! I do not know if I like this familiarity. Even though I am in Germany really I could be anywhere in Europe right now, the only differences is the people and the history. Still the same shops, still the same fast food restaurants and still the same coffee houses.

Day 9- 11th June:

What a beautiful city, Prague has such wonderful architecture. What I am finding quite upsetting and distressing is seeing the amount of homeless people on the streets. The tour guide was telling us about the really high unemployment rate they have here, since the great depression in the 1930”s. Our tour guide was really nice, she is from Australia but studying here in Prague! Just being a tour guide for a bit of spare money. "According to some, student migrations are a long over-looked but increasingly important form of European mobility” (King, 2002:100). She talked about her motivation to seek experience for pleasure and to widen her knowledge and education. I really should have taken a “gap year”. If you have the money to do it, it is so easy! Everyone is eager nowadays to experience something new to the norm. “This is why we are seeing complex overlappings of socio-economic and mobility types which are defying neat and migratory and motivational categorisations” (Bianchi, 2000 cited in: King, 2002:99). No longer is migration just for economic reason, but for reasons to seek please, excitement and adventure.

Day 18- 20th June:

Feeling pretty homesick now, missing home comforts. Does not help I am on a massive downer from meeting the best people ever in Slovenia. Really did not want to leave! Anyway luckily all the hostels we have stayed in have had free Wi-Fi, which is cool. Giddens (2006) states that the widespread use of the internet and mobile phones is deepening and accelerating the process of globalisation. Mum has been keeping me updated with the entire goings on back home, and I have been updating her on my travels. She is been especially worried because of the floods that have been happening across Europe, luckily we have missed all of that, it has been pretty devastating though. Without “globalisation” disasters abroad would not be brought to our attention. "Individuals are now more aware of their interconnections with others and more likely to identify with global issues and processes" (Giddens 2006:53).

Day 25 - 27th June:

We have been in Croatia for three days now. This island is gorgeous, would not mind moving out here! Secluded beaches, crystal clear waters, scorching hot weather, this is the life! So glad we decided to meet, Alex, Eleanor and Nikita out here in a 5* hotel for a week. But I feel like Croatia is becoming too popular now, I feel like now I have seen it I am kind of just jumping on the bandwagon with it all. In recent years it is become really “touristy” and full of English people. It is now “de-exoticized” (Edensor, 2007; Larsen, 2008) This in turn, facilitates its commodification, but also reduces is special appeal (Cohen and Cohen, 2012) they
just try and bleed people dry buying into it, plus it is hard to get to grips with the actual culture here unless you go to an island further out. All I want to do is experience something new, cannot complain though beach, sand, sun and sea are the best.

References:


Image 2: http://shorring.wordpress.com/