

BOOK REVIEWS

ATTRACTING VISITORS TO ANCIENT NEIGHBOURHOODS. CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE TOURIST- HISTORIC CITY OF PLYMOUTH, UK

DANIEL BARRERA-FERNANDEZ, InPlanning, Groningen, The Netherlands, 2016,
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Daniel Barrera-Fernandez approaches an interesting topic related to the tourist attractiveness of the historic centre of a port city. Plymouth (UK) has a long urban evolution, marked by its military function, resulting in an important built and maritime heritage.

Conducting the topic in a logical manner, the first part of the book includes an introduction on the necessity to revitalize the urban historic centres through cultural tourism. The analysis starts, within the first chapter, with a detailed view on the cultural importance of the European urban historic centres and on the recent trends in their tourist valorisation.

The second part of the book, structured in four sections, is dedicated to a complex tourist assessment of Plymouth city, based on five relevant objectives: the evolution of heritage conservation policies and of policies dedicated to the management of the city's historic centre; current protection regulations and the role of the public administration in their implementation; the evolution of the heritage valorisation model; the current significance of tourist activities and the heritage role in constructing the city's tourist model; the actors involved in the tourist valorisation of the historic centre in relation to culture and heritage, tourism, urban planning and economic development.

A concise characterization of the city is used

by the author to argument its choice as a case study: Plymouth represents a medium size urban centre that is multifunctional (tourism, creative activities), having a peripheral position that didn't constitute a barrier for its tourist role, mostly that it is situated in the most visited region at national level, both by local and by foreign tourists. However, the city does not represent a traditional cultural destination as the city development was not initially influenced by the tourist activity. So that, the local public administration made efforts to construct a tourist product based on the celebration of significant events that influenced the city history. In time, the development of tourism was related to building a new city image – a cosmopolite city – following its adaptation to the current socioeconomic changes through developing a new economic activity: the port area was adapted to accommodate tourism, shopping, leisure, and creative activities, in completion of the city's cultural and urban tourism.

Chapter 1 is constructed on defining the urban historic centre as having two main traditional valences: aesthetics and historicity, completed by its value as identity and collective memory space. Given the fact that the cultural significance of an urban historic centre is constituted by the presence of historic monuments, their conservation and economic valorization through urban regeneration actions represents a priority. The economic valorization of urban historic centres should be

based on adaptive management and it can be directed through tourism activities. But, there is a need to pay attention to the possible negative effects that this economic activity may have on the heritage due to overusage. In this context, the British model of heritage protection is detailed as an example of good practices.

Chapter 2, called *Approach to the city of Plymouth*, is dedicated to an analysis on the case study's urban evolution. The city's favorable position in the south-western part of United Kingdom assured its access to both the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean and it facilitated its contribution to the development of the British Empire through maritime exploration. The military function of the city's port surpassed its commercial activity as it has been a base for the Royal Fleet and it was once the largest naval base in Europe. Although there are still left some elements that remind of its military function (e.g. the Royal Artillery), most of the specific heritage of the port was destroyed during the second World War bombardments. The same situation affected also a part of the city historic centre and, after its reconstruction, an enclave of the post-war architecture was developed around two axes: north-south and east-west. The historic centre continues to include old original buildings from the medieval period while most of the city's built heritage owes its existence to the army (e.g. the old port). Starting from the '80s, the naval industry registered a gradual diminishment of its production which finally reduced significantly after 1990. The new socioeconomic context supposed the city's economic reorientation to tourist activities meant to valorize the urban built heritage.

Chapter 3 includes a first part focused to analyse the evolution of the conservation measures and of the Plymouth historic centre management. The second part, presents the current situation of heritage conservation and the local policies of historic monuments protection.

The penultimate chapter of the book, *Tourism in Plymouth's historic city*, presents the history of the city's tourism activities. The author distinguishes between four stages: 1. the period before the second World War when the

city of Plymouth was not a classic seaside resort, although it had several natural resources (mild weather, beaches). The city's attractiveness was related to transoceanic connections. Starting with the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, health tourism was developed in the area through a series of bathing facilities. Also, apart from bathing, yachting became increasingly popular; 2. the postwar period was marked by the devastating effects of the second World War on the tourist industry. But, the local public administration made huge efforts in a short time to relaunch the tourist activity of the city (e.g. through the renovation of bathing facilities and of maritime heritage assets); 3. the 1960-1980s period was a phase of changes in the tourist market: travelling abroad became fashionable, due to the development of air transport. A series of measures to attract tourists arose, among which the proposition (never carried out) to transform Plymouth into a sailing centre. A decade later, Plymouth started to open a number of marinas. Also, historic events started to be valorized for tourism: in 1970, the 350 Mayflower anniversary took place, and, in 1988, the city hosted the 400 Armada celebrations; 4. the '90s-present time period includes new management strategies and priorities oriented towards a new city image (the valorization of the waterfront being regarded as a playground: footpaths, cycle ways, water sports; new logo for city branding: "Plymouth-Spirit of Discovery", which focused on the romantic, imaginative and creative features of the city replacing the references to war and the empire which had dominated before).

The last chapter of the book represents a detailed analysis of the actors involved in the tourist resources management of the historic centre of Plymouth.

The volume represents the result of a well-documented research that raises attention on a current problem of cities where tourism plays an essential role: the sustainable development of urban historic centres. In this sense, there should be respected a few directions: the original urban landscape to be included in the conservation and valorization processes;

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economic growth-led tourist activities; limited sustainable management of tourist heritage. negative effects of tourism while advantages The author has the merit of complexly are maximized; decreased seasonality through analyzing the tourist activity under the complementary and complex activities; influence of multiple factors (environmental, permanent adaptation to tourist requests, historic, economic, social) that limit or favour through new niche tourism activities. its development.

The book constitutes a valuable resource for good practices models in the field of

GLOBAL CHANGE AND HUMAN MOBILITY

JOSEFINA DOMINGUEZ-MUJICA (Ed.), Springer,
Singapore, 2016, 347 pp. ISBN 978-981-10-0049-2

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Global Change and Human Mobility is a scientific publication much expected especially by the geographic community, but also by other social scientists and policy-makers. It delivers a state of the art discourse and analyses made by leading geographers from the International Union of Geographers (IGU).

Considering the recent events in North Africa, Syria and Turkey and the major impact that those have over the European Union position regarding the migrants (inter-state tensions on refugee quotas), the present book manages to emphasize the crucial importance of understanding the subtle relationships between “locations and societies” or otherwise said, the perspective that Geography can bring to better understand this process.

This book has another, very human side to it. It also tells the story of the human struggle in search for a better life. What forces storm inside a human to make him/her wonder around the world in search of a future for him/her and his/her family? The sacrifices made seem to be outweighed by the advantages found in the host place/country, as for someone to leave their friends and families in search of a better life, the pull factors need to be much stronger than the push factors. Behind all the extremely actual scientific research, Global Change and Human Mobility manages to offer us a discreet story behind the main story.

The 35 authors wrote 17 chapters, elegantly covering the wide spectrum of human mobility, ranging from theoretical aspects, changes in the paradigm, causes and effects on diverse actors: states, local communities, local businesses, different ethnic and social groups and different minorities, among many other causes and effects.

Going into detail, we observe that the first chapters offer strong arguments for the geographical perspective over human mobility. In the first chapter, Montanari and Staniscia (2016) conclude: “the speed with which the extent and the characteristics of human mobility change is only comparable with that of financial flows”. Human mobility is an essential part of a modern and globalised world, and geographers are here to grasp the underlying details in order to improve the side effects of this process. The same authors suggest broadening the concept of transnationalism adding a new transregional perspective in order to strengthen the spatial issue, and the geographical perspective, I would add, in migration studies as this will help to provide the much needed scientific data to improve policy making.

Moving on through the book, the same geography centred perspective is also found in the chapter written by Goler and Krisjane (2016). As they put it: “permanent changes of general contexts on the global level and the accelerating variability of local socioeconomic circumstances make it necessary to overcome thinking in national dimensions and territories”. The two authors emphasize the need to broaden the perspectives, because migration is global and it needs a global approach to tackle it.

In a chapter focusing on the migration patterns in the French speaking province of Quebec, Armony, (2016) describes the tension between two competing models, multiculturalism and interculturalism. He then concludes that the Canadian migration policy could be understood as an approach to “targeting specific countries, cultures or groups as desirable (and less “desirable”) sources of immigration”. At this stage, it gets hard not to observe that every country wants to attract the

best that migration has to offer. So who gets the rest? Why does this have to be a win-lose situation? But before getting there, why do possible migrants get into a situation with only one possible choice left – to leave their home country?

Further on, Sasonne (2016) analyses the role of Latin American migrants as actors and agents of territorial transformation. Using sound geographic evidence and in an eloquent manner, the author concludes: “social and territorial cohesion are related to the transnationalism relationships, which imply the new profile of the postmodern migrant that reacts to the dynamic of globalization with high flexibility and shape the landscape of the city”. This result is a much needed fact in the conceptual debate that geographers have with sociologist over the relationship between space and society. Broadly the same conclusion, based on the useful perspectives provided by geographers, is reached by Godenau and Lopez-Sala (2016) as they see “borders are useful «places» for bringing (back) space into social theory”.

Other chapters focus on the integration of migrants into the host communities. Snajdr and Drbohlav, (2016) analyse the migration of Thai people into the Czech Republic, and Irimias and Michalko write about the Hungarian experience in the UK. Another interesting chapter is written by Richard et al. (2016) as they focus on the integration of different minorities in France. They end their analysis with the idea that: “there are significant difficulties to working on the integration of immigrants”. The general conclusion that rises from these chapters is that the host countries are favourable for migration as long as migrants blend in.

Dominguez-Mujica et al. (2016) make a wonderful argumentation for the lack of hope as a push factor for migration: “The majority of the young people we surveyed, in addition to reproaching Spain’s leaders, institutions and employers for their poor management of the crisis, express a pessimistic view of Spain’s potential for change in the short term”. My personal understanding of this quote is a transfer of hope through migration. It shows

that human mobility transfers not only know-how, personal experiences among others, but also hopes. Migrants take the hope of a better life from their origin country and invest it into the host country.

The next chapters also analyse trends regarding university students. Universities seem to take advantage of the good side of human mobility. In a context in which the general demographic trend is represented by population decrease, generating fewer national students, getting in more students from foreign countries will balance out the negative demographic trend. But, unfortunately, as Fonseca et al. (2016) put it: “Immediate economic objectives seem to be the main motivation pushing universities towards the recruitment of Brazilian students”. I hope that this cannot be generalised, as the first aim of a university should be a totally different one than that of a financial institution, even if it’s part of a short term economic objective.

Clearly the main goal of a university is to create highly skilled specialists, and, in this regard, Mendoza and Ortiz (2016) state: “This positive scenario becomes gloomy and dark for the future due to the lack of opportunities in Catalan universities for fresh PhD graduates (yet it is accepted that geographical mobility is a feature of the current university job market)”. Lack of opportunities at the local scale is a globalising characteristic, few places providing most of the opportunities. Pareto law still “at large”. Should we accept without any constraints the benefits of this large scale mobility of university jobs?

This trend of “accepted geographical mobility” of the university graduates is also noticed by Glorius (2016) for the case of young Spaniards, as the author notes: “unemployment rates of the higher educated are “catching up”, as they have difficulty to find a decent position that matches their qualification”. Yet another problem of the highly qualified work-force of whose only choice seems to be the acceptance of geographic mobility.

Usually, when we talk about human mobility,

the first place of choice is a prosperous city in a rich country, but Nienaber and Roos (2016), through the case studies that they evidence, say that rural areas are already part of the “globalised migration patterns”. Migration is an important effect of globalisation, and rural areas start to have a much important role in this regard. If cities were constructed as heterogeneous/cosmopolitan places, rural areas don’t have the same coping mechanisms. It will be extremely interesting to see how these ancestral places, with a vulnerable structure, will cope with globalising changes regarding migration.

Continuing to evidence the urban-rural trend, in his chapter, Ianoş (2016) managed to show a strong correlation between the increasing domestic migration flow and the deindustrialization process. Romanians left their original homes and moved to the cities in search of a better life. As soon as that perspective of a better life ended, some of them moved back to their places of origin, many of them to the countryside. The same author continues to evidence another case of the highly qualified working force searching for better perspectives. In this regard, Ianoş concludes: the “attraction for choosing the USA and Canada by Romanian specialists in engineering and computer science, in particular, makes Romania lose the most creative of its workforce”. It’s a zero-sum game that enforces a positive feedback loop, hard to escape from, that further on creates a deeper lack of opportunities for the departing country. It is quite clear that when a country loses its creative workforce, its endogenous development opportunities are severely affected.

In the final chapter of the book, Nascimento et al. (2016) reach to a surprising conclusion, taking into account all the previous examples. They tell us a story of a community that plays with the fire, literally. The authors notice that people, from their case studies, only leave their homes when they have no other option

faced with an imminent eruption of the Pico do Fogo volcano from Cape Verde. Those inhabitants are left with no other option, as they live close to a waiting-to-happen disaster, when it comes to that moment their only option is to seek refuge in another place. It makes me question why do other people, from much more peaceful places of the world, get in a situation where their only option is to go to another place?

After lecturing the book, it is very hard not to ask myself why “in an era of increased anti-immigrant sentiment across the rich countries” (Glatzer and Carr-Lemke 2016), migration seems to be the only option left? Why do people, which are not under the threat of an exploding volcano, chose to transfer their hopes to another country? As many chapters had argued, many authors stressed out the importance of migrant integration into the local customs and way of living. Those not willing to adapt to the new settings are not that welcomed, but still their only option is to move away. Why did it become so hard to provide opportunities without the need to change places / countries / continents / cultures / mentalities / friends and so on?

Global Change and Human Mobility is a well-tuned orchestra in showing yet another time the unique perspective that only the study of space through Geography can bring forward in the social sciences. It also raises some unresting questions about the advantages and disadvantages of human mobility, about who has to gain and who has to lose. Freedom of movement is essential in the today’s world, while the innovative and competitive economies will attract the best workers, giving us a strong reason to “accept geographic mobility”. But as long as mobility is caused by the lack of opportunities and as long as mobility is built on the expense of others, we should use the learnings from this book for a win-win situation as mobility must represent a choice for the better and not a last resort.