

Book review

Reinventing the Local in Tourism: Producing, Consuming and Negotiating Place

Edited by Antonio Paolo Russo and Greg Richards

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This book is aimed to further investigate a long-established topic in tourism studies, namely, the transformation of places through tourism. Derived from the recent development of new research frameworks, tourism platforms, and tourism consumption models, this book attempts to cover the way in which “places” and localities in tourism are restructured and consumed. The book covers 14 studies presented at recent conferences and expert meetings organized by the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research, written by academicians from various disciplines of tourism, urban planning, place making, human geography, and sociology, which diversify the contents and approaches of each topic. The authors range from current PhD candidates to senior lecturers and professors who mainly reside on European continent.

In the beginning of this book, the editors mention one, among many, reason why tourism studies are commonly marginalized that is “the struggling to provide models of universal validity to interpret reality and anticipate foreseeable development” (p. 3). To anticipate the challenges, as the editors add, there are growing interests from new generation of scholars to make the “turns,” to raise the questions about the roots of travel and tourism, to understand the next step in the evolution of tourism, and to give more practical solutions for tourism actors. Those movements are fundamental for tourism studies in order to produce new breakthrough developments that are capable of addressing the emerging issues in the contemporary age, but also to take tourism studies to the next level in the social science. For that purposes, some of the authors successfully bring “fresh air” with the

exploration on new “local” tourism products such as living with locals or attaining “back door” moments facilitated by online platforms and relational/sharing culture, and also the collaboration of tourism actors in co-creating the local and urban landscapes, while some others redefine the long-known principles in tourism such as the host-guest relationships.

It must be stressed, however, that this book is not written on the future perspective, but rather on geography, anthropology, and cultural perspective, even though the chapters discussing innovative, peer-to-peer products, and new pattern of consumptions can serve as the stepping stone to further investigate the future of localities and collaborative tourism. Therefore, as to those who are seeking the collection of future tourism issues, this book can provide the complimentary resources about current issues and the dynamics of tourism. As well, despite the limitation of topics to be universally applied, this book can be a useful reference for those concerned with tourism planning with focus on social-economic impact and community empowerment, also to tourism academics and to students who are interested in understanding new perspectives in tourism management.

In detail, the book is split into three sections. The first part entitled “New Products and Hospitality Models” unravels new and innovative “local knowledge” products as the result of global mobility, recent development of information platforms, and evolution of consumer’s culture. Rosso and Dominguez begin the chapter with a critical explanation of two-dimensional diagrams demonstrating the classification of hospitality models according to their physical setting and business models. In the diagram, mainstream model of accommodation represented by the traditional form of accommodation like conventional hotels/resorts, and the model based on private lodgings like apartment rentals are currently challenged by the unprecedented growth of peer-to-peer dwelling model with the “every day” character of the surroundings by which guests can freely undergo their daily routines like

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cooking or meeting the neighbors. Following that scheme, Rosso and Dominguez focus on a deeper analysis of the sociocultural and geographical drivers of home exchange, while Bialski examines another “new form of lodging in tourism” phenomenon with focus on authority of Airbnb. Gilli and Ferrari concentrate on the local hospitality initiative for small towns or villages in Italy, known as “The Diffuse Hotel” with emphasis on sustainability concept. Forno and Garibaldi explore the success of Addiopizzo Travel to promote “ethical travel” by not financing the Mafia’s system. While interesting and can inspire duplication, it is safe to say that some case discussed might only be applicable in selected regions, as acknowledged by Rosso and Dominguez, swapping home in the destinations like Asia might involve cultural point of view and complex social dimension.

Second section, “Flow and Communities”, addresses the motives, expectations, and engagements of such new travelers driven by those emerging hospitality models and collaborative and/or sharing principles. Pappalepore and Smith suggest the alteration of traditional role of host and guest where “tourists want to feel and act like locals and locals are encouraged to feel and act like tourists” (p. 97), and also propose co-creation map depicting interlinked interactions made by tourists-residents-workers in an urban tourism setting. Milne, Deuchar, and Peters thoroughly provide a fascinating detail about the Get Local program designed to build cohesive resilient communities and social-cultural capital with the help of ICT and community informatics approach in Auckland, New Zealand. Fundamentally using the real-time social media accounts, Paris and Hannam explore the application of the digital social convergence, defined as collaborative responses and actions toward disasters through various online-based channels: websites, blogs, and social media in the Chilean earthquake and the Bangkok protest. Taking place in an urban ethnic destination in Budapest, Smith and Zatori challenge the traditional understanding between host and guest, instead point out that a complex group of actors of residents, hosts, visitors, guests, domestic, and international tourists intermingle in the process of co-creating urban environments, particularly those with ethnic attribute and alternative experiences.

The last section, “Built Environments and Globalized Spaces”, discusses the integration of such new global mobilities in local physical landscapes. Ponzini, Fotev, and Mavaracchio highlight the extensive travel of designs and architectural experts, as well as increasing financialization drive similarity of buildings and planning arrangements across cities around the world. Comparing Marina Bay Sands in Singapore to the megastructure project in Chongqing, China, and False Creek Vancouver to Dubai, similar architectural icons are found despite different local arrangements such as the planning authority. Richards discusses the emerging rise of “megahostels” in the center of major cities, which serve as the catalyst for the redevelopment of degraded areas or the meeting place by youth travelers to engage with local residents, other travelers, or creative communities. Soro analyzes the relationship between different mobility of people and the place formation processes to understand the meaning of places by comparing four different restaurants in Barcelona, particularly in their entire settings (menu, furnishings, and the interaction happen within). Sans and Dominguez use map and quantitative statistical exercise to examine three statements highlighting benefits of Airbnb (revitalization of neighborhoods, increase and diversification of quality tourism, and supporting families) in Barcelona, and explore consequences of the widespread of Airbnb toward urban planning regulations. Ioannides, Leventis, and Petridou highlight the efforts of the alternative tour operator, namely, Alternative Touris of Athens, that actively promotes the spatial consumption of the marginalized Athens such as the soup kitchens, the homeless, and the immigrants, as well as encourages visitors to participate in the transformation of urban landscape by engaging in street art projects or volunteer tourism.

It has to be said that the book has relatively minor criticism. The editors put essential efforts to ensure the audiences, especially those with no tourism or geography background, to be knowledgeably aware of the context discussed. First, the editors provide a constructive introduction to lead the readers getting a grip on the following discussed topics. Second, to conclude the

book, the editors synthesize and bring together key trends from the topics, propose a construction of the new place-making system model, and summarize the direction for future researches. The concluding chapter is, once again, helping the readers not only to draw the connections between topics, but also to engage with critical thinking on “what is the future model of

tourism and to what direction the localities of tourism will develop?”

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