Culture and society in tourism contexts


This is an ugly duckling of a book but it reads like a good party. Its cover is a washed-out teal adorned with a small black and white photograph of a quintessential Mediterranean postcard image: a boat in the sun on a beach complete with a whitewashed house in the background. Upon entering the text you hear interesting stories and meet new people, hear new voices and tunes you would like to dance to.

The book is based on several cases of ethnographic research projects on tourism in the Mediterranean region. While this is not the most visually engaging book, the title and the contents are as thought-provoking as critical theory aims to be. The editor claims that the research question guiding the book, “how a context shaped by the long-time presence of tourism mediates and characterizes the way social actions acquire sense for people living in those regions” (pp. vii–viii), is simple. Perhaps the question is deceptively simple but the answers are anything but that, they are intriguing. The cases in the book are framed by an introduction and conclusions written by the editor.

The introduction not only highlights the contents of the individual chapters, as it does in many edited books, it sets the stage. It does this through explaining the both structure of the book and laying out the premises for the work with a model and putting forward working hypotheses. This explains the title, which was a conundrum for this reviewer before reading the introduction. At first glance, it may seem odd to talk about overarching concepts such as society and culture in tourism contexts; the conventional way of thinking about these concepts would be to place tourism in the context of culture and society. Here tourism is given prominence as a force shaping the development of culture and society and defined as a “complex set of socio-technical devices” (pp. xxiv) and tourism space as a referential frame. The model is that of intersecting spheres of tourism space, place, and tourist territory where the intersections are negotiated ground and tourist setting. The aim of the book is to “dissolve the problem of the relations of tourism and power” (pp. xxiv) with three foci in the ethnographic studies. First, the marketing of intangibles; second, distinctive forms of moving capital and consuming territories; and third, international division of labour and territories with mobile workers and residents of multiple localities. The working hypotheses are two: that the social and cultural practices documented are oriented by the long-term presence of tourism and that the way in which they are perceived and understood is mediated by tourism space.

As an edited book, each chapter can be read as an independent text, highlighted by the fact that on the first page of each chapter is not only the title and author, but the rest of the information for referencing. This is convenient for using parts of the book as part of a package of course readings, but the downside is that all the references are at the end of the book, not with each chapter and there is no index.

Eleven authors contributed to the book: five anthropologists, two sociologists, two cultural geographers; and two who identify themselves as specializing in tourism studies. They come from Spain, France, Croatia, Germany, USA, UK, Norway, Italy, and the Netherlands, so there is a diversity both in their scholarly and national background. This is highlighted by the editor in the preface in a detailed account of the origins of the book set forth to declare the importance of “linguistic plurality in scholarship” (p. vii). This desire stems from the fact that the chapters are based on studies written in and drawing upon literature in several languages, and just the native languages of communities in the Mediterranean region. This appealed to me, a native speaker and academic working in a language spoken by less than 400,000 people today.

While the delimitation of the projects on which the book is based is the Mediterranean region, the descriptions, analysis, and theoretical framework has global relevance for tourism studies and for the social sciences in general. The ethnographic case studies inform the reader on issues such as regional development initiatives, globalisation and/or glocalisation, land use conflict, tourism policies, rural and urban decline and regeneration, tourist/host/tourism relations, and conservation matters. The
The minutiae of how these issues are manifested in the tourism contexts in question such as marketing images, roads and signage, construction and urban planning, the uses of language, the invention of histories and heritage, and the mobility of people, money, and goods across borders are vividly laid out and analyzed. The cases have global relevance and the issues are well known in the peripheral North Atlantic region that I call home.

*Culture and Society in Tourism Contexts* is Volume 17 in the Tourism Social Science series published by Emerald; as many of its predecessors, it proves the old adage that one should not judge a book by its cover. This is an engaging and thought-provoking text not just for tourism scholars and practitioners but for anyone interested in contemporary culture and cultural studies.

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### Second home tourism in Europe: Lifestyle issues and policy responses

*Second Home Tourism in Europe: Lifestyle issues and policy responses*  

Second home tourism has been an issue of discussion for years among tourist experts, real estate agents, and politicians. However, the topic has not received much attention in academic circles and *Second Home Tourism in Europe* is therefore a welcomed addition to the tourism literature. In twelve chapters, the book brings together a wide range of studies from twelve European countries. It sets out to highlight recent insights about the spatial diversity and social complexity that comes with second home expansion in Europe in the context of mobility patterns induced largely by tourism. The book is a compendium of recent research that incorporates issues such as planning and policy, leisure class mobility and recreation-based lifestyles, socio-economic and territorial development perspectives on social change, and trans-European coverage of second home impacts across Europe. The multidisciplinary nature of the book has to do with the fact that second homes are not always linked directly to tourism and leisure activities. Thus, the book fills a gap in the literature on second home tourism.

The editor briefly introduces second home tourism and its contribution to social science, spatial planning, and public policy. However, most of the introduction is made up of lengthy summaries of each chapter. This academic book collects studies bound together by a geographical location rather than a theme (other than the quite broad theme of second home tourism in Europe) and is not intended to be read from cover to cover. Instead of evaluating the book as if it were a homogenous volume, maybe it merits being approached through its range of contents, which readers seeking information on specific subjects will find valuable.

*Second Home Tourism in Europe* examines key dimensions of the second home challenges from a tourism perspective: owners’ conditions, perceptions and roles, location factors, criteria and patterns, expansion drivers, and public policy choices. Some of these issues have been examined separately in other books and journals. The expansion of second homes is an important feature of land use and landscape change in many locations mentioned in this book. The common denominators of the twelve chapters in this book include: problems of definition and measurement of the second home phenomenon; the diversity and complementarily of authors’ approaches; age and use of second homes; today’s naturalistic and holiday utopias and their eco-social impacts evident in the “landscapes” of second homes; the role of heritage in their distribution; and, the importance of geography of amenities and of historical and cultural dimensions. Some of the research focuses on eco-social