

## BOOK REVIEW

### **The Sociology of Tourism. Theoretical and empirical investigations**

*Apostopoulous, Y., Leivadi, S. & Yiannakis, A., editors (2001).  
Routledge.*

The sociology of tourism has been widely studied in last decades, to become in one of the subthemes some sociologists tend to specialize once graduated. To more than one decade from its first publication, *The Sociology of Tourism* still triggers a hot debate in the fields of social sciences applied on tourism. On this book, founding parents of sociology of tourism take part to give an all encompassing model to understand the role of tourism in society. Senior sociologists such as Erik Cohen, Graham Dann, John Urry, Stephen Britton and Malcolm Crick, from present diverse views on tourism-effects which merits to be discussed. It is unfortunate classic books are not reviewed by scholarship. The intent of this essay-review is to debate the main argument of the book but at the same time, reconsidering the conceptual limitations of the sociology of tourism as it has been framed. Defined tourism as a multibillion industry, or “the largest peacetime movement of people”, this book emphasizes on the needs of reinventing the discipline to give accurate information on the effects of tourism in peripheral communities. The introductory section refers to tourism as “a dynamic” activity which guides an era, a way, a spirit.

Following this reasoning, the contemporary tourism develops the needs to recreate the places under the lens of authenticity to expand the commoditization of spaces, persons and cultures. Rather, the second section focuses on the individual experience of tourists following a variety of forms. The success of tourism for expanding itself to four corners of this world depends on its ability to introduce the phase of “anticipation” in citizenry. Social networks are so important to predict tourist behaviour as individual experience. This means that experience not only is shaped by being-in-relation to, but by the articulation of rules, roles and institutions. The third part signals to the material asymmetries generated by the tourist system in the whole. Moving ahead or travelling



is today viewed as a sign of prestige. It has been determined by a pervious hierarchical stratification, which is enrooted in the economy. Equally important, mass tourism, which consolidated as a trend in the mid of XXth century, generated some imbalances in hosting societies, some of them already addressed by sociology and anthropology. The most striking chapter of the book is fourth, because it explores the pervasive role of development theory and tourism creating a strong dependency from peripheral cultures from centre. To what an extent tourism enlarges the gap between pour and rich nations or helped to distributing the wealth to hosting countries is the main discussion of this section. Parts V and VI are limited to the role played by tourism as agency of social change and political stability. The last chapters analyze the potentialities of sociology of tourism to establish a new fertile ground of research in next years. Though the sociology of tourism is in its infancy, editors and authors convey that the variety of loci or themes to addresses is a criterion for the consolidation of this sub-discipline.

This book represents a project of high quality not only by the contributors' trajectory but also by the excellence of the discussion. Nonetheless, one of the most troubling aspects of this book is the rejection that tourism has not changed substantially in almost 2.000 years. Persistently, throughout the text, authors insist in what they call "democratization of travels" as the mark that delineates the limits of tourist and non-tourist world. The end of WWII facilitated the conditions for the upsurge of tourism as a contemporary form of consumption, which triggered an abrupt form of travelling respecting to other ancient civilizations. This means to say tourism is a practice enrooted in modernity alone. Secondly, experts failed to trace the roots of modern tourism as a mechanism to alleviate the social conflicts of industrial America. First and foremost, the sociology of tourism as discipline has adopted a paradigm imposed by financial organization as World Bank or World Tourism Organization. On one hand, the importance of tourism is strictly based on the profits it generates for the world or the flux of passengers travel without knowing thousand of modern citizens are today immobile. On another, the first sociologists of tourism prioritized their analysis on the tourist destination leaving other elements of whole system into oblivion. The tourist or native's voices exhibited the valid source to find the truth. Leading senior sociologists as Dean Maccannell (1976) echoed of these beliefs, paving the ways to the formation of American sociological Wave in tourism studies.

Unlike the German colleagues, American sociologists envisaged tourism as a direct result of modernity, associated to the reduction of

working hours, advances in technology and wage-led enhancements. These scholars not only did not speak ancient languages but also did not work with archaeological sources to realize some other civilizations practiced something like similar than tourism before us. Even, the archetype of holidays (as institution) was a legacy of Roman Empire, not an invention of modern West. Ideologically, the American wave of sociology adopted the theory of democratization to mark the difference between modern and ancient world, without knowing democratization does not mean massification. In ancient Greece, democracy was a political resource to consult the society when the king was not sure. Cornelius Castoriadis (2006) has explained convincingly how to govern whole mass of population British Empire manipulated the sense of democracy to make believe the massification is good, and hierarchy is bad. This begs a second problem which leads to sociology of tourism directly to ethnocentrism. Archaeologists as Ugo Paoli (1975) showed how Romans organized their leisure travels as modern West. Thinking tourism as a contemporary act irrespective of other non-western practices means that we are accepting our values as the only valid ones (under the lens of uniqueness). Because of our supremacy in the use of mobile technologies, we, the modern citizens, expand the peace through tourism and hospitality.

What these scholars ignore is that modern tourism as it has coined after WWII, works as the other side of terrorism. To cut the long story short, mass-migration imported a lot of ideologies, some of them very dangerous for capitalist bourgeoisies such as communism and anarchism. In this context, Anarchists in XIX and XXth centuries perpetrated a lot of attacks to top ranked officials. With the passing of years, some terrorists were convinced their ideology would survive if they devote considerable work and attention to the formation of worker-unions. States monopolized the use of force to subrogate and expulse anarchists beyond their boundaries, but at the same time legalized the worker union claims under the figure of strike (see Wagner Act). The benefits adopted by Government not only improved the conditions of workforce to boost capitalism but also resulted in the inception of “modern tourism” (not tourism). What beyond the borderland was named as “terrorist attack”, inside was called “strike”, both shares commonalities such as the extortion and surprise factor which should be explored by the sociology of tourism (Korstanje & Clayton, 2012; Skoll & Korstanje, 2013).

**Maximiliano E. Korstanje**

## REFERENCES

- Apostopoulous, Y. Leivadi, S. & Yiannakis, A. (2001). *Sociology of tourism: theoretical and empirical investigations*. New York, Routledge.
- Castoriadis, C. (2006). *Lo que hace a Grecia: Seminarios 1982-1983: La creación humana II. De Homero a Heráclito*. Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Korstanje, M.E. & Clayton, A. (2012). Tourism and terrorism: conflicts and commonalities. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol.4, No.1, pp.8-25.
- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. California, Univ of California Press.
- Paoli, U.E. (1975). *Rome: Its People, Life, and Customs*. Westport, Greenwood Press.
- Skoll, G.R. & Korstanje, M.E. (2013). Constructing an American fear culture from red scares to terrorism. *International Journal of Human Rights and Constitutional Studies*, Vol.1, No.4, pp.341-364.

**Maximiliano E. Korstanje**, Department of Economics, University of Palermo, Argentina.